GARTH ENNIS • MARC SILVESTRI
THE DARKNESS
SIL VES TRI
BATT
steve
TOP COW UNIVERSE
ORIGINS
VOLUME 1

The Darkness created by:
Garth Ennis, Marc Silvestri
and David Wohl

published by
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The Darkness®
Origins
Volume 1

The Darkness® Origins Volume 1

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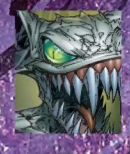

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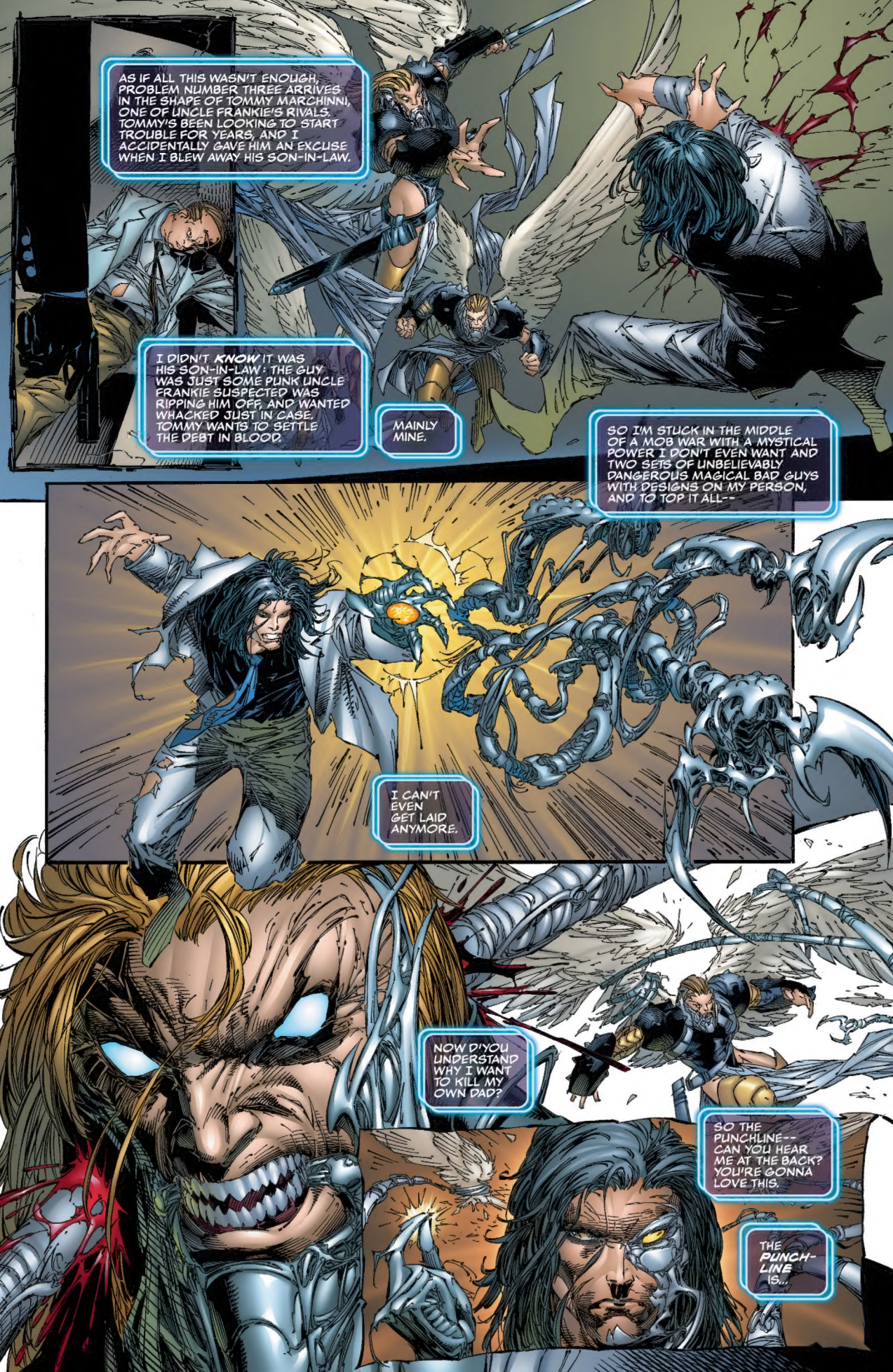
PREVIEW

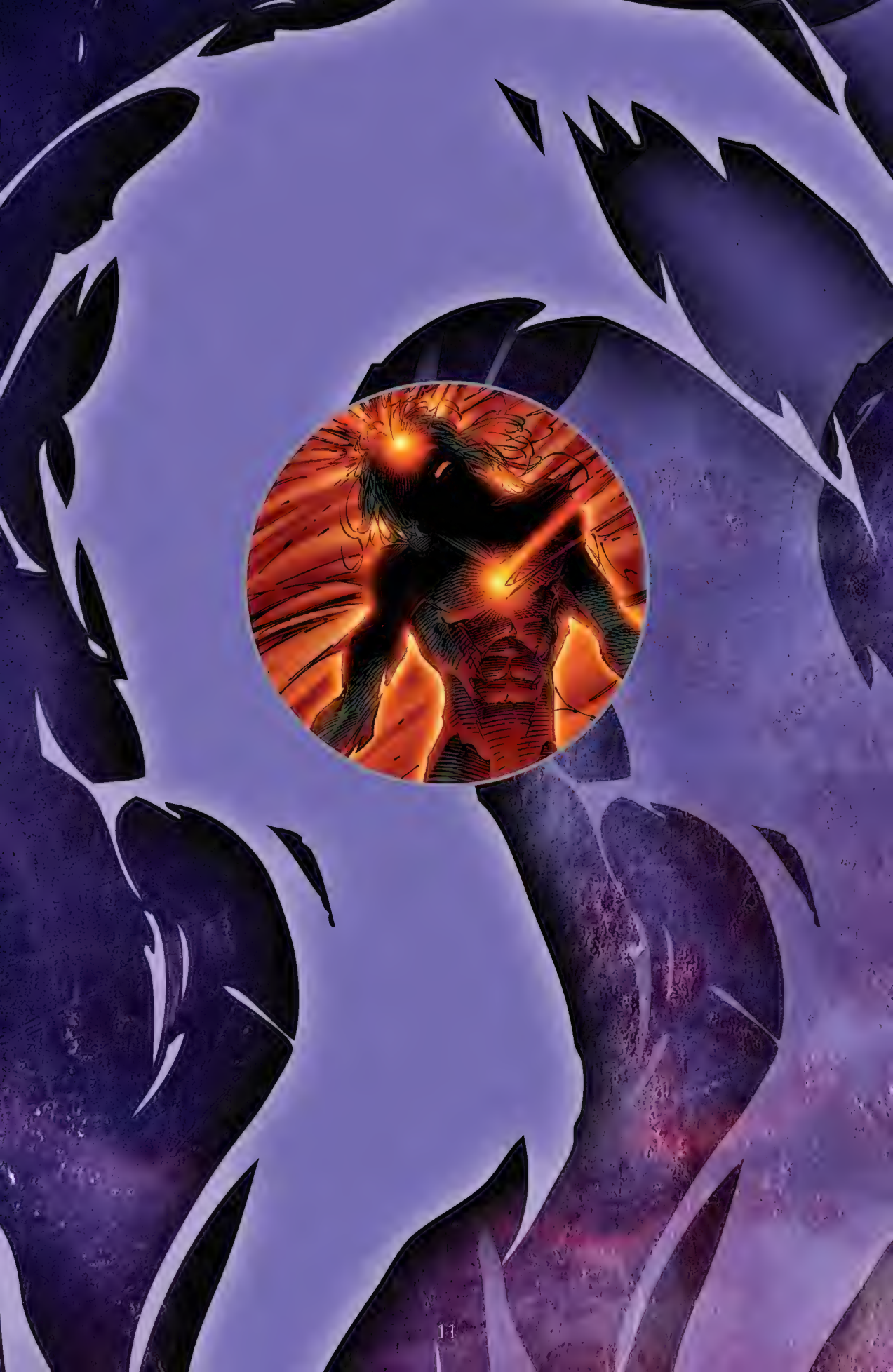
story: Garth Ennis
pencils: Marc Silvestri
inks: Matt "Batt" Banning
colors: Steve Firchow and Peter Steigerwald
letters: Dennis Heisler
ink assists: Victor Llamas

STOP ME IF YOU'VE HEARD THIS ONE BEFORE...
MY NAME'S JACKIE AND I LIKE SHARP SUITS, FAST CARS, LARGE CALIBRE HANDGUNS AND EATING IN EXPENSIVE RESTAURANTS. MY SECOND FAVORITE PASTIME IS DRIVING BEAUTIFUL WOMEN TO THE EXPENSIVE RESTAURANTS IN THE FAST CARS, AND WEARING THE SHARP SUITS SO I CAN IMPRESS THEM ENOUGH TO GET THEM INTO BED.
MY FAVORITE PASTIME IS GOING TO BED WITH THEM.
MY DAD DIED BEFORE I WAS BORN, WHICH IS A SHAME BECAUSE RIGHT NOW I'D QUITE LIKE TO KILL THE SON OF A BITCH MYSELF--BUT MORE ON THAT LATER.
I GOT TAKEN IN BY MY UNCLE FRANKIE, KNOWN TO HIS FRIENDS AS BUTCHER FRANCHETTI AND TO HIS ENEMIES AS "OH GOD NO, DON'T KILL MY CHILDREN, DON FRANCHETTI". UNCLE FRANKIE'S A GOOD GUY WITH A BAD TEMPER WHO SOMETIMES HAS ONE OR TWO PROBLEMS...
SO SOMETIMES HE GETS ME TO SOLVE THOSE PROBLEMS FOR HIM, WHICH I FIGURE IS THE LEAST I CAN DO. WHAT WITH MAKING ME PART OF HIS FAMILY AND ALL.

SO THIS IS ALL FINE UNTIL A COUPLE DAYS AGO, WHEN I TURN TWENTY-ONE AND FIND OUT I'M THE LATEST INHERITOR OF THE DARKNESS--WHICH IS AN ANCIENT POWER ENABLING ME TO DO JUST ABOUT ANYTHING, SO LONG AS IT'S VIOLENT AND MESSY AND SCREWS PEOPLE UP.
THIS IS GOOD BECAUSE IT MAKES ME ONE SERIOUS BADASS, BUT IT'S BAD BECAUSE IT TURNS OUT THAT ONLY ONE GUY PER GENERATION CAN WIELD THE DARKNESS--AND IT'S PASSED ON BY BIRTH. AS SOON AS YOU CONCIEVE, THE CHILD INHERITS IT, AND YOU DROP DEAD.
AS OF NOW, MY SECOND FAVORITE PASTIME IS IRRELEVANT AND MY FAVORITE ONE IS MORE DANGEROUS THAN RUSSIAN ROULETTE.
BUT MY PROBLEMS ARE ONLY JUST BEGINNING. THE BROTHERHOOD OF DARKNESS, A BUNCH OF GOOFS WHO WEAR BLACK AND PROBABLY READ TOO MANY CRAPPY FANTASY NOVELS, THEY GET IN TOUCH AND TELL ME I HAVE TO FULFILL THIS CRAZY PROPHECY ATTACHED TO THE DARKNESS POWER: I GOTTA LEAD THEM TO THEIR DESTINY AS LORDS OF THE UNDERWORLD, OR SOME CRAP.
I SAY NO THANK YOU.
PROBLEM NUMBER TWO THEN KICKS MY DOOR DOWN AND BUSTS IN SHOOTING: TURNS OUT THE ANGELUS, THE AGE-OLD ENEMY OF THE DARKNESS, KNOWS I'VE JUST MANIFESTED MY NEW POWER AND WOULD VERY MUCH LIKE TO WIPE ME OUT BEFORE I POSE ANY KIND OF THREAT TO THEM.
THEY SEND THE ANGELUS WARRIORS TO DEAL WITH ME.


AS IF ALL THIS WASN'T ENOUGH, PROBLEM NUMBER THREE ARRIVES IN THE SHAPE OF TOMMY MARCHINNI, ONE OF UNCLE FRANKIE'S RIVALS. TOMMY'S BEEN LOOKING TO START TROUBLE FOR YEARS, AND I ACCIDENTALLY GAVE HIM AN EXCUSE WHEN I BLEW AWAY HIS SON-IN-LAW.
I DIDN'T KNOW IT WAS HIS SON-IN-LAW: THE GUY WAS JUST SOME PUNK UNCLE FRANKIE SUSPECTED WAS RIPPING HIM OFF, AND WANTED WHACKED JUST IN CASE. TOMMY WANTS TO SETTLE THE DEBT IN BLOOD.
MAINLY MINE.
SO I'M STUCK IN THE MIDDLE OF A MOB WAR WITH A MYSTICAL POWER I DON'T EVEN WANT AND TWO SETS OF UNBELIEVABLY DANGEROUS MAGICAL BAD GUYS WITH DESIGNS ON MY PERSON, AND TO TOP IT ALL--
I CAN'T EVEN GET LAID ANYMORE.
NOW D'YOU UNDERSTAND WHY I WANT TO KILL MY OWN DAD?
SO THE PUNCHLINE-- CAN YOU HEAR ME AT THE BACK? YOU'RE GONNA LOVE THIS.
THE PUNCH-LINE IS...

I'M THE HERO.



ISSUE #1

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NEW YORK CITY. THE LOWER EAST SIDE. ON A NIGHT SO COLD IT HURTS TO BREATHE.
PARK
PUBLIC PARKI
ENTRANCE
WHAT'S HE DOIN' NOW?
GETTIN' READY TO GO.
UH-HUH...
TIME TO CRAP OR GET OFF THE POT, UNCLE FRANKIE.
EXIT
I DUNNO, JACKIE. I LIKE TO BE CERTAIN ABOUT THESE THINGS.
WHADDA YOU THINK?
I DON'T KNOW, UNCLE FRANKIE. ALL I CAN SAY IS, HE LOOKS LIKE THE KIND OF GUY WHO'D RIP YOU OFF. HE HAS THAT KIND OF FACE.
HE DOES, HUH?
WHAT THE HELL.
KILL HIM.

WHAT-

HOLY GOD!

NO!

KRRRUMMCH!

OH MY GOD! MY LEGS!

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU-OH, JESUS!

AAAAOHHH! AAAOOHHH!

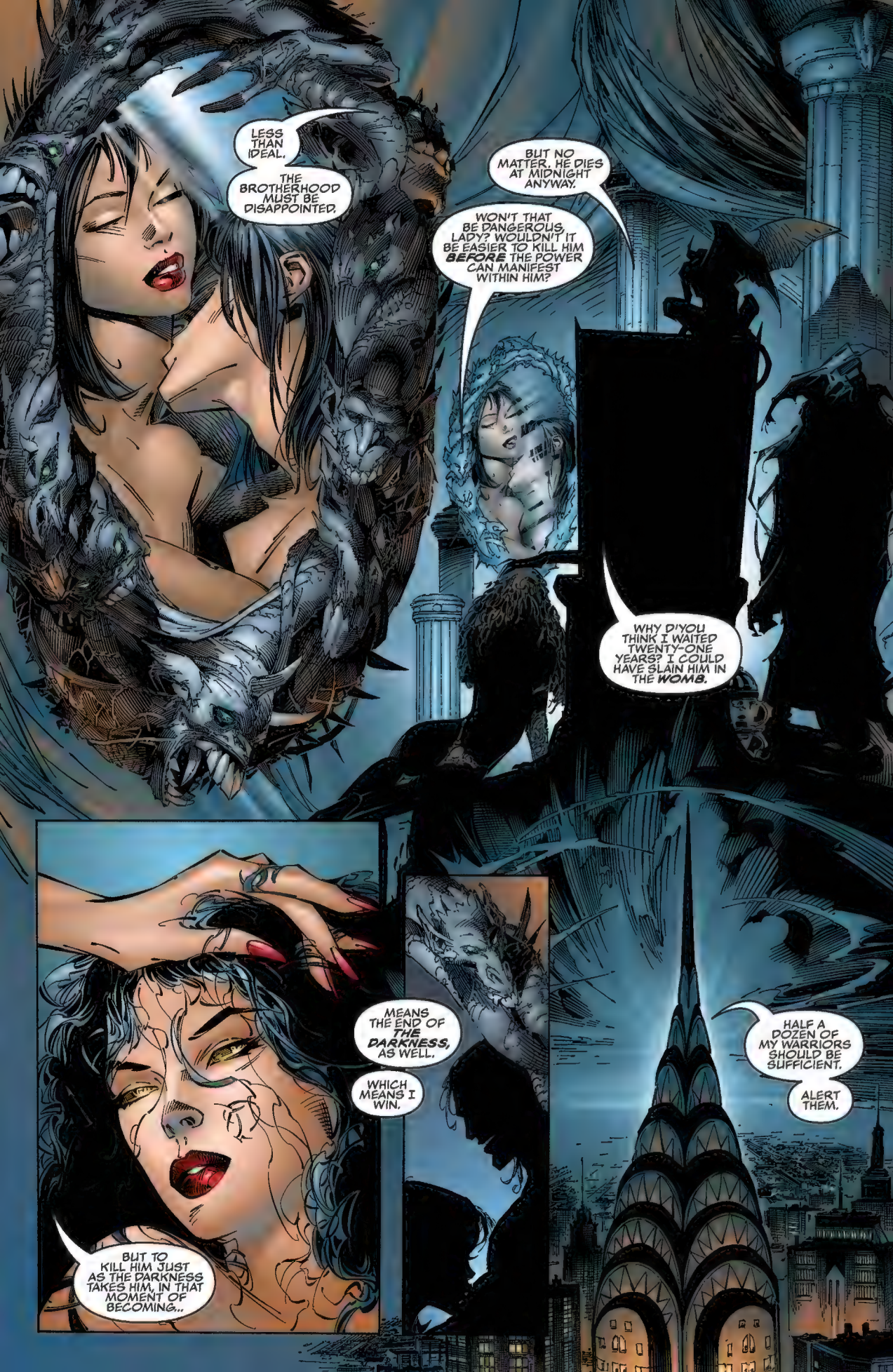
BADAHH BADAHH BADAHH

COMING
OF
AGE

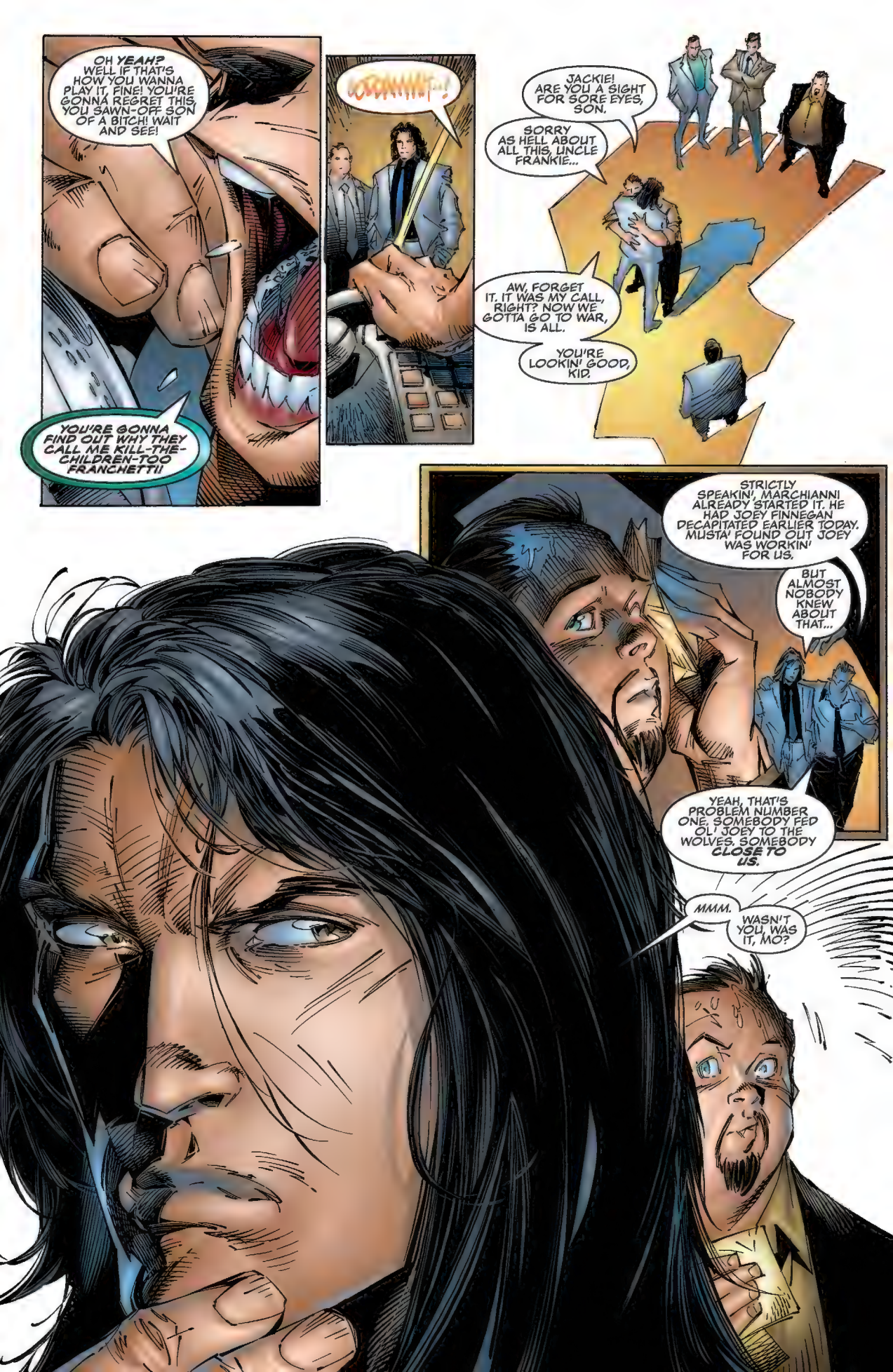
NINETY-SECOND STREET
MISTER ESTACADO...!
HOW YOU DOING, JENNY? MILK.
MILK?
MILK, I LIKE ME JUST THE WAY I AM.
OH, WELL, DON'T WE ALL...!
MAN, THIS PLACE. YOU EVER LOOK AROUND A CLUB LIKE THIS AND WONDER HOW THE HELL YOU WOUND UP HERE?
LONG WAY FROM THE BOWERY, THAT'S FOR SURE. I BET YOU'RE NOT WONDERING ANY-THING OF THE KIND...
NOT ME. I WAS BORN FOR THE HIGH LIFE-HEY, HOW ABOUT A MARTINI FOR THE LADY?

OH, WELL THAT'S... HOW DID YOU KNOW I WAS DRINKING A MARTINI?
FROM THE NEARLY EMPTY ONE IN YOUR HAND.
OH, THAT'S RIGHT... I OH I FORGOT!
IT'S EASILY DONE, UH...
SHANDI.
SHANDI, RIGHT, I'M JACKIE, SO WHAT DO YOU DO? ARE YOU A MODEL?
WELL, YEAH, I'M HOPING TO BE AN ACTRESS...
...AS A MATTER OF FACT, MY LAMBORGHINI'S PARKED RIGHT OUTSIDE. YOU LIVE CLOSE?
HEEHEEHEE YES. JUST FIVE BLOCKS. LET ME GET MY COAT.
TWELVE BUCKS FOR THE MARTINIS. MILK'S ON THE HOUSE.
I OUGHT TO COME HERE MORE OFTEN.
MM. YOU KNOW, THIS BEING THE LATE TWENTIETH CENTURY AND ALL, TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE MENTALLY RETARDED IS GENERALLY FROWNED UPON...
SHE'S NOT RETARDED--!
JACKIE, I JUST HEARD YOU PROMISE TO GET HER A WALK ON PART ON THE SIMPSONS.

HE REALLY IS TOTALLY AND UTTERLY IMMORAL...
HE'S A MOB ENFORCER, YOU'LL FIND IT GOES WITH THE TER-RITORY.
MY LORD, YOU DON'T THINK HE'S A LITTLE... FRIVOLOUS, MAYBE?
HE'S ALL WE'VE GOT.
HE'S THE CHAMPION OUR BROTHERHOOD'S BEEN WAITING FOR.
HE WILL TURN TWENTY-ONE AT MIDNIGHT TOMORROW. WHEN HE COMES OF AGE HE WILL INHERIT A POWER BEYOND HIS VILEST NIGHTMARES.
HE HAS LESS THAN TWENTY HOURS REMAINING OF THE LIFE HE KNOWS...
AND WE MUST BE READY FOR HIM.
BECAUSE IF I KNOW THE ANGELUS, THAT SMUG BITCH HAS ALREADY MADE HER PLANS.


LESS THAN IDEAL.
THE BROTHERHOOD MUST BE DISAPPOINTED.
BUT NO MATTER. HE DIES AT MIDNIGHT ANYWAY.
WON'T THAT BE DANGEROUS, LADY? WOULDN'T IT BE EASIER TO KILL HIM BEFORE THE POWER CAN MANIFEST WITHIN HIM?
WHY D'YOU THINK I WAITED TWENTY-ONE YEARS? I COULD HAVE SLAIN HIM IN THE WOMB.
MEANS THE END OF THE DARKNESS, AS WELL.
WHICH MEANS I WIN.
BUT TO KILL HIM JUST AS THE DARKNESS TAKES HIM, IN THAT MOMENT OF BECOMING...
HALF A DOZEN OF MY WARRIORS SHOULD BE SUFFICIENT.
ALERT THEM.

LITTLE ITALY
WELL, YOU LOOK LIKE A MAN WHO GOT HIS ITCH SCRATCHED.
HOT DOG
WELL AND TRULY. ALL'S RIGHT WITH THE WORLD, VINNIE.
HEY, JUST 'CAUSE JACKIE ESTACADO GETS SOME, DOESN'T MEAN EVERYBODY'S SINGIN' LOUIS ARMSTRONG NUMBERS.
AS YOU, MY FRIEND, ARE ABOUT TO FIND OUT...
WELL, HOW WAS I SUPPOSED TO KNOW THAT? I THOUGHT HE WAS STEALIN' FROM ME! SCREW *THAT*! HE *WAS* STEALIN' FROM ME!
YOU NEVER EVEN ANNOUNCED THE ENGAGEMENT. I MEAN LOOK ONNA BRIGHT SIDE, NOW YOU AIN'T GOTTA PAY FOR THE WEDDIN'...
THAT GEEK YOU WHACKED LAST NIGHT? TURNS OUT HE WAS TEN DAYS AWAY FROM BEIN' TOMMY MARCHIANNI'S SON IN LAW.
AH.
NO. I DON'T SEE WHY I GOTTA APOLOGIZE, NOT AFTER THIS MORNIN'.
HEY, DON'T YOU PUSH ME, MARCHIANNI!


OH YEAH? WELL IF THAT'S HOW YOU WANNA PLAY IT, FINE! YOU'RE GONNA REGRET THIS, YOU SAWN-OFF SON OF A BITCH! WAIT AND SEE!
YOU'RE GONNA FIND OUT WHY THEY CALL ME KILL-THE-CHILDREN-TOO FRANCHETTI!
JACKIE! ARE YOU A SIGHT FOR SORE EYES, SON.
SORRY AS HELL ABOUT ALL THIS, UNCLE FRANKIE...
AW, FORGET IT. IT WAS MY CALL, RIGHT? NOW WE GOTTA GO TO WAR, IS ALL.
YOU'RE LOOKIN' GOOD, KID.
STRICTLY SPEAKIN', MARCHIANNI ALREADY STARTED IT. HE HAD JOEY FINNEGAN DECAPITATED EARLIER TODAY. MUSTA' FOUND OUT JOEY WAS WORKIN' FOR US.
BUT ALMOST NOBODY KNEW ABOUT THAT...
YEAH, THAT'S PROBLEM NUMBER ONE. SOMEBODY FED OL' JOEY TO THE WOLVES. SOMEBODY CLOSE TO US.
MMM.
WASN'T YOU, WAS IT, MO?

ME?!
YEAH, YOU. YOU'RE STANDING THERE IN A POOL OF SWEAT. YOU'RE NOT LOOKING TOO GOOD, MO...
YOU NERVOUS?
DON FRANCHETTI, JACKIE, FOR GOD'S SAKE! I ALWAYS SWEAT LIKE THIS! IT'S MY SIZE! FOR CRYIN' OUT LOUD, YOU KNOW THAT!
WHAT THE--
EEEEIGHH!
NOOOOO!
TRIP!

FOOOM!!!
OH MY GOD.
SORRY, MO. ONLY THING I COULD THINK OF AT SHORT NOTICE.
S'OKAY, JACKIE. YOU KNOW THE FUNNY THING?
WHAT'S THAT, MO?
I ACTUALLY DIDN'T RAT ON JOEY FINNEGAN.
GUY WHO THREW IT GOT AWAY, DON FRANCHETTI.
I WANT MARCHANNI FACE-DOWN DEAD IN HIS PEPPERONI PIZZA.
GET IT DONE.
HOW ABOUT THAT.
OH WELL. NO HARD FEELINGS, MO?
NO HARD.. FEELINGS... JACKIE...

CHEZ ESTACADO: NICE PLACE. VIEW OF THE DARK.
VINNIE, NO-ONE'S GETTING TOMMY MARCHIANNI WITHOUT CALLING IN AN AIRSTRIKE. I CHECKED IT OUT. THAT PLACE OF HIS IS A FORTRESS.
MMM? WELL, GENERALLY PRETTY GOOD. WE'RE WELL AHEAD ON SCALPS. HOW ABOUT AT YOUR END?
COOL... LISTEN, THINGS ARE GONNA HEAT UP TOMORROW. YOU MAKE SURE UNCLE FRANKIE KEEPS HIS HEAD DOWN, OKAY?
JACKIE.
HUH?
YOUR TIME JACKIE.
GUN'S NO GOOD JACKIE.
NOT AGAINST THIS JACKIE.
WHO THE HELL IS THIS?
YOUR TIME'S COME AROUND.
DARK TIME.
AAAAAAAAAHH!

2GGG
AAAAHH!
HE'S SCREAMING, MY LORD--
THAT'LL BRING THE ANGELUS! GET HIM OUT OF THERE!
EEERACH!!
NO FIGHTING THIS JACKIE
SHOULDN'T WANNA FIGHT JACKIE
FIND HIM!
BLUUUHH!
THIS IS ALL YOURS JACKIE
IN HERE!
JUST LET IT HAPPEN JACKIE
IT'S YOUR BIRTHRIGHT

JACKIE ESTACADO! LISTEN TO ME! WE'RE HERE TO GET YOU OUT!
GET AWAY!
WE CAN HELP YUUHH!
OH MY GOD.
THEY'RE HERE.
MY LORD, THEY'RE HERE! THE ANGELUS HAS--
AAAAAGGHH!
BRRRRRRRIIIIII!
YOU DON'T HAVE TO DIE JACKIE
PYOWW!
PYOWWW!
JUST LET IT OUT JACKIE
ANYTHING YOU WANT JACKIE
LET WHAT OUT? WHAT AM I MEANT TO DO?!
ZING!
ZING!
ZING!

BUT LET THE DARKNESS OUT
KRRUNKTH!
SLIISSSHHH!
SQUIIITCH!
UH?
KRAKK!
SHRRIPP!
GUHHH...!
WUHH! HELP--
DON'T BE STUPID. YOU'VE GOT A SWORD STUCK THROUGH YOUR HEART. YOU'RE A DEAD MAN.
TELL ME WHAT THE HELL JUST HAPPENED TO ME--ALL OF IT--AND I MIGHT JUST MAKE IT QUICK FOR YOU.
YOU-- DON'T GET IT-- YOU'RE--
YOU'RE THE ONE--
HAVE TO GO TO-- LIBERTY--
BAKOOMMM!

JESUS. DECOR BY FREDDY KREUGER.
DON'T BOTHER TO GET UP.
YOU MARCHIANNI'S?
IN ONE. HE SAID PUT JACKIE ESTACADO IN THE GROUND ALONG WITH HIS BASTARD UNCLE.
DON FRANCHETTI?
...OUGHTA BE BREATHIN' HIS LAST RIGHT ABOUT NOW. DON MARCHIANNI SENT THE EASTWOOD BROTHERS.
DON'T YOU...FORGET JACKIE
ANYTHING YOU WANT JACKIE
TELL THE FAT BASTARD I SAID HELLO.
BAKOOOOM
JUST LET IT OUT

VINNIE?
JACKIE, WHERE THE HELL HAVE YOU BEEN? OH MY GOD, THE WHOLE WORLD'S GONE CRAZY! WE GOT A SLAUGHTER-HOUSE DOWN HERE!
SLOW DOWN, VINNIE. TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED.
WE JUST GOT HIT! RIGHT HERE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD! HARD!
UNCLE FRANKIE?
THEY-- THEY GOT HIM!
HKKK--!

HE'S ON HIS WAY TO THE HOSPITAL NOW, BUT IT AIN'T LOOKIN' TOO GOOD. I WON'T LIE TO YOU, JACKIE...
I THINK MARCHIANNI'S ALREADY WON.
NO...
NO HE HASN'T.
I'M GONNA END THIS THING TONIGHT.
NEW JERSEY ONE HOUR LATER
...AN' KEEP YA GODDAMNED EYES OPEN! FRANCHETTI AIN'T OUTTA THE GAME YET!
YES, DON MARCHIANNI.
I SWEAR, HE'S GETTIN' MORE PARANOID BY THE HOUR. STATE OF THE ART SECURITY SYSTEMS, THEM GODZILLA-LOOKIN' ATTACK DOGS, AN' TWO HUNDRED GUYS PACKIN' ARMALITES--AN' HE'S STILL SCARED TO BE LEFT ALONE IN THE JOHN.
TELL ME ABOUT IT. WE'RE ALL OVER THIS MOTHER, DON MARCHIANNI...
"YOU MAY DUMP IN PEACE."

HUH...?
MMP!
YOU HEAR SOMETHIN'?
NOPE.
MMMMP!
HHEEEEELPP!

AMAZED!
HOLY GOD--
HANG ON, BOSS! WE'RE--
OH, JESUS!
ANYTHING YOU WANT JACKIE
DIDN'T WE SAY JACKIE
OH YEAH,

YOU'LL DO FINE JACKIE
I GOT ABOUT A HUNDRED QUESTIONS, BUT MAINLY: WHAT IS THE DARKNESS?
HAVEN'T YOU GUESSED JACKIE
GO A LONG WAY JACKIE
DARKNESS REALLY LIKES YOU JACKIE
YOU ARE THE DARKNESS JACKIE
LUCKY LUCKY BOY
IT LIKES ME, HUH?
YOU HAVE THE POWER JACKIE
YOU CAN DO ANYTHING
AND YOU'LL PAY THE PRICE
TO BE CONTINUED...

ISSUE #2

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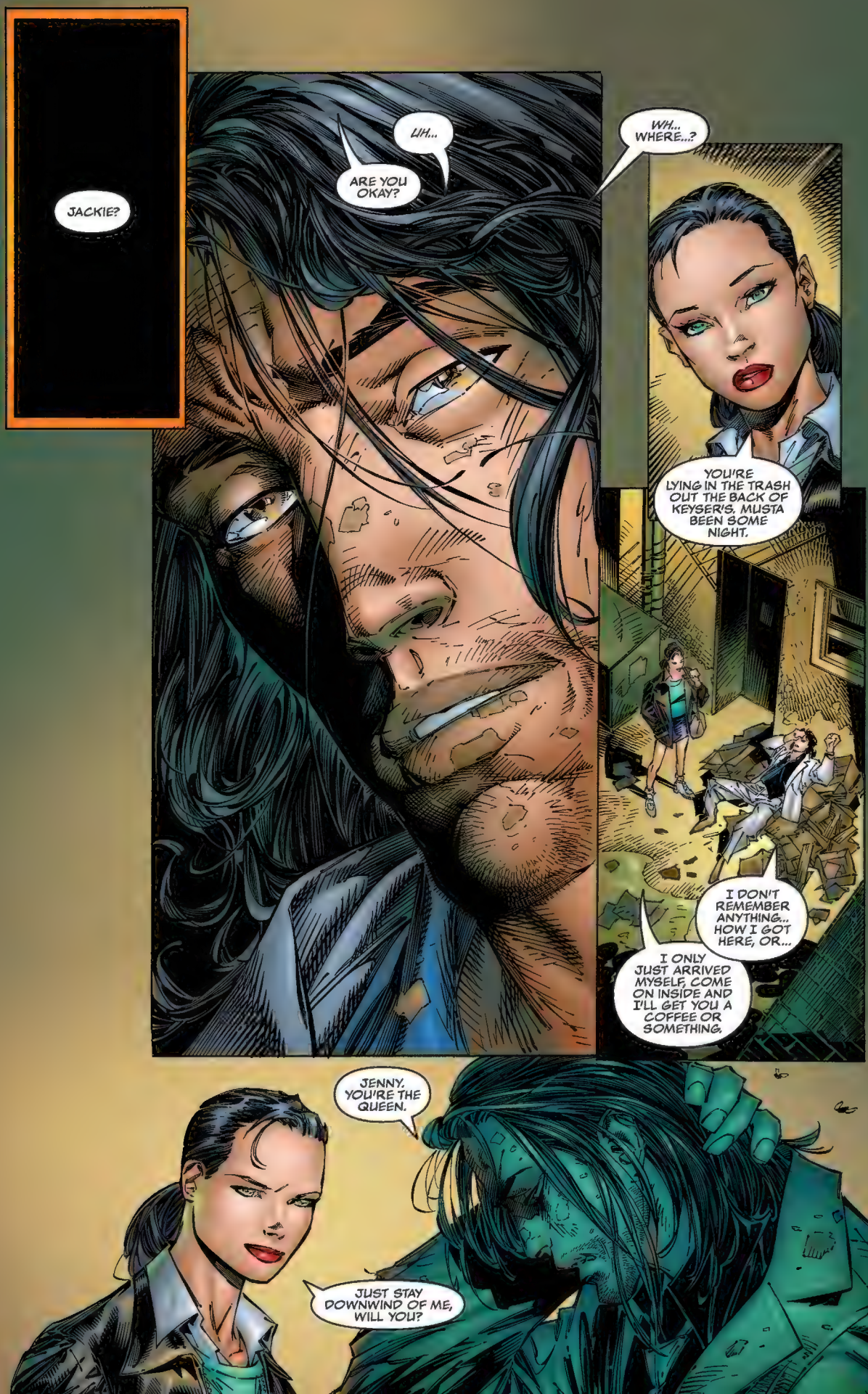
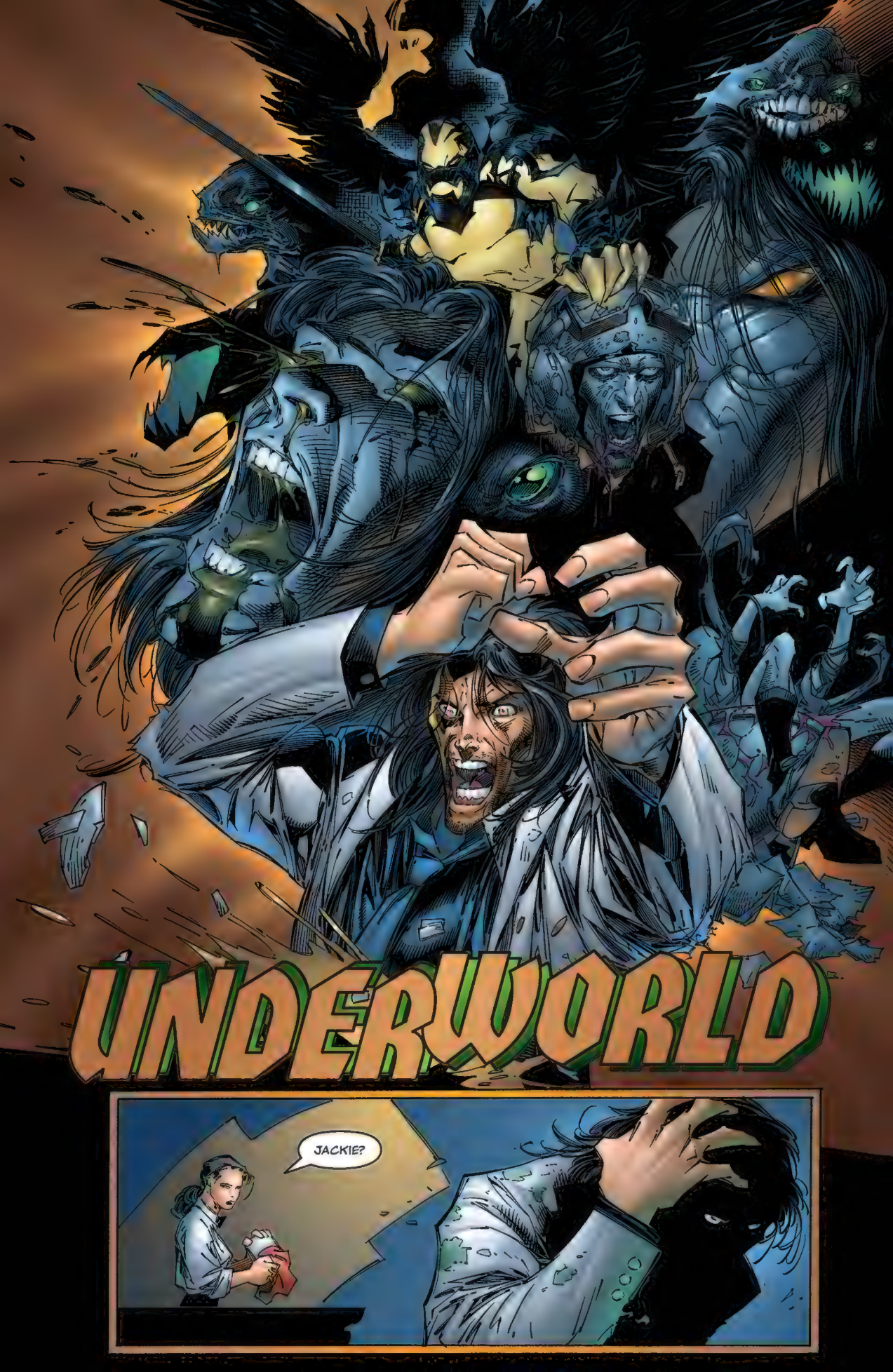

JACKIE?
UH...
ARE YOU OKAY?
WH... WHERE...?
YOU'RE LYING IN THE TRASH OUT THE BACK OF KEYSER'S. MUSTA BEEN SOME NIGHT.
I DON'T REMEMBER ANYTHING... HOW I GOT HERE, OR...
I ONLY JUST ARRIVED MYSELF, COME ON INSIDE AND I'LL GET YOU A COFFEE OR SOMETHING.
JENNY, YOU'RE THE QUEEN.
JUST STAY DOWNWIND OF ME, WILL YOU?

I THOUGHT YOU NEVER DRANK, ANYWAY.
I DON'T. IT'S NOT LIKE A HANGOVER. IT'S...
I KEEP THINKING OF DARKNESS...
THAT WOULDA BEEN WHEN YOU PASSED OUT.
NO, I MEAN THE WORD DARKNESS, LIKE SOMEONE SAID IT TO ME, OVER AND OVER AGAIN.
I GOT A CALL... SOMETHING ABOUT UNCLE FRANKIE, AND--THIS IS GONNA SOUND WEIRD BUT I GOT THE STRANGEST FEELING I WENT TO NEW JERSEY LAST NIGHT...
OH, WELL THAT EXPLAINS IT. HOLD STILL A SECOND--
HUH?
OH.
YOU'RE A CLASS ACT, JACKIE. DRINK YOUR COFFEE AND THEN GO GET SOME SLEEP, OKAY?
YEAH--
HOLY GOD!


UNDERWORLD
JACKIE?

NOTHING?

NOTHING.

REPORT.

IT'S AS YOU EXPECTED, MY LORD.

THE APARTMENT LOOKED LIKE A WARZONE. ALL FOUR OF OUR MEN, SIX ANGELUS WARRIORS, AND WHAT APPEARED TO HAVE BEEN A HIRED ASSASSIN-- SPREAD ALL OVER THE PLACE.

JACKIE ESTACADO IS NOW THE DARKNESS.

WHICH IS JUST WHAT WE WANTED, EXCEPT THAT NOW WE HAVE NO WAY OF BRINGING HIM IN. THERE'S NO SAYING HE WON'T RESIST IF WE TRY TO FORCE HIM HERE.

WE'LL JUST HAVE TO HOPE HE MAKES HIS OWN WAY TO US.

AND THAT THE ANGELUS DOESN'T GET TO HIM FIRST.

KEEP THE LINES OUT. WATCH HIS HOME, I'LL STAY HERE AT THE LOOKING-POOL: THE NEXT TIME ESTACADO USES HIS POWERS, I CAN GET A FIX ON HIM.

YES, LORD SONATINE.

NO SURVIVORS AT ALL FROM THE TEAM WE SENT IN?

I'M AFRAID NOT. YOU KNOW WHAT ANGELUS WEAPONS ARE LIKE, MY LORD. THEY WERE ALMOST COMPLETELY EVISCERATED.

THEY WEREN'T FAST ENOUGH. IF THEY'D GOT ESTACADO OUT OF THERE SOONER, THEY'D STILL BE ALIVE.

PARTICULARLY AS I'D LIKE TO HAVE KILLED THE WORTHLESS INCOMPETENT BASTARDS MYSELF.

MMM. FOUR GOOD AND LOYAL MEN DEAD, MY LORD. MOST REGRETTABLE.

IT CERTAINLY IS...

GET TO WORK.

HOW BAD IS IT?
VERY.
HAPPENED JUST AFTER MIDNIGHT. THEY NAILED HIM FROM TWO BLOCKS DOWN THE STREET WITH A SCOPE RIFLE.
HE TOOK ONE IN THE CHEST, JACKIE. DOC TOLD ME IT CLIPPED HIS TICKER. GONNA BE TOUCH AN' GO FOR THE NEXT FORTY-EIGHT HOURS.
YOU GET THE SHOOTER?
NOPE. BASTARDS GOT AWAY. WE WERE ALL TOO BUSY WITH THE DON, I GUESS.
HEY, YOU HEAR ONE BIT OF GOOD NEWS? MARCHIANNI?
I HEARD.
YEAH, NOBODY KNOWS WHO DID IT, BUT APPARENTLY THEY FOUND THE OLD BASTARD RIPPED TO PIECES ON THE COMMODE.
HIS NEPHEW'S ALREADY TALKIN' PEACE.
END OF WAR.
I JUST HOPE UNCLE FRANKIE'S AROUND TO SEE IT.

VINNIE, LISTEN, I GOT SOMETHING I NEED TAKEN CARE OF. IS BUTCHER JOYCE BUSY RIGHT NOW?
NOT THAT I KNOW OF.
I GOT A BUNCH OF STIFFS IN MY APARTMENT. SOMEONE TRIED TO HIT ME LAST NIGHT, TOO.
THERE'S ABOUT A DOZEN OF THEM, AND I NEED THEM TO DISAPPEAR-- LIKE REALLY DISAPPEAR, YOU KNOW?
SURE. I'LL GET OL' BUTCHER TO DO A HOUDINI, NO PROBLEM.
OKAY, BECAUSE... WELL, JUST SO HE KNOWS WHAT TO EXPECT, SOME OF THEM ARE KIND OF UNUSUAL...
UNUSUAL?
YEAH, THEY'VE GOT-- YOU KNOW, LIKE--THEY'VE GOT--
--WINGS.
WINGS?
YEP.
JACKIE. ARE YOU OKAY?
'CAUSE I MEAN, WELL, IF YOU'RE INTO ANYTHING WEIRD OR WHATEVER, THAT'S COOL-- BUT I WOULDN'T WANT ANYTHING HAPPENIN' TO YOU, YOU KNOW?
IT AIN'T GONNA HELP DON FRANKIE'S RECOVERY TOO MUCH IF HIS NUMBER ONE HITTER GETS BUSTED FOR SOME KINDA PERVERTED DEVIANCY...
I'M FINE, VINNIE.
GO CALL BUTCHER, OKAY?

YEAH, I'M FINE VINNIE...
EXCEPT THE ONE GUY IN THIS GODDAMNED WORLD I ACTUALLY CARE ABOUT IS LYIN' IN THERE WITH A HOLE IN HIS CHEST...
AND IT WAS ME THAT KILLED TOMMY MARCHIANNI, BUT I DID IT IN A WAY I CAN'T EVEN BEGIN TO DESCRIBE...
AND IT LOOKS LIKE I'M STUCK WITH THIS POWER CALLED THE DARKNESS WHETHER I WANT IT OR NOT...
AND I HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO IDEA WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT.
YOU'RE THE ONE--
HAVE TO GO TO-- LIBERTY--
LIBERTY, LIBERTY, LIBERTY...
LIBERTY.

THE WARRIORS FAILED.
THE DARKNESS HAS RISEN AGAIN.
BUT PERHAPS IT WAS TOO MUCH TO HOPE FOR, DESTROYING THE DARKNESS IN ONE FELL SWOOP.
BETTER TO KILL THIS ESTACADO WRETCH BEFORE HE BREEDS, AND NEUTRALIZE IT THAT WAY...
WILL THAT WORK?
OH YES. IF HE CANNOT PASS THE POWER ON, IT WILL DIE WITH HIM.
NOW HE'S TOO STRONG FOR THE WARRIORS, AND I DON'T WANT TO RISK LOSING YOU TO HIM...
I AM NOT AFRAID, MY LADY ANGELUS.
I KNOW THAT.
BUT THERE ARE MORE EFFECTIVE WAYS THAN SIMPLE VIOLENCE.

ONLY LIBERTY I KNOW.
MISS HOVEN
WENDERS! GET A TEAM TOGETHER! HE'S COMING!
HE'S COMING HERE!

SO MUCH FOR THAT IDEA.
JESUS!

WE HAVE HIM, MY LORD. THAT LITTLE JOLT YOU JUST GAVE HIM DID THE TRICK.
IT WON'T LAST LONG. BRING HIM BELOW, QUICKLY.
IT IS WAY PAST THE TIME THAT JACKIE ESTACADO LEARNED ABOUT HIS BIRTHRIGHT.

WAKE.
WHUH!
WHAT THE HELL--WHO--WHERE AM I--?
YOU ARE ONE HUNDRED FEET BELOW THE STATUE OF LIBERTY.
AND AT THE MOST IMPORTANT POINT OF YOUR LIFE.
YOU ARE THE INHERITOR OF THE DARKNESS--AND THEREFORE OF POWER BEYOND YOUR WILDEST IMAGINING. YOU ARE GOING TO CHANGE THE WORLD, JACKIE ESTACADO.
YOU ARE GOING TO RIP IT TO PIECES, AND REBUILD IT IN THE IMAGE DESIRED BY THE BROTHERHOOD OF DARKNESS.
YOU WANT TO SLOW DOWN FOR A SECOND? WHAT BROTHERHOOD?
US.
US? YOU AND ME? WHAT THE HELL KIND OF BROTHERHOOD IS--
NO, ESTACADO.

US.
MY NAME IS SONATINE.
THIS IS THE BROTHERHOOD OF DARKNESS.
WELCOME.
WELCOME HELL. YOU BETTER START GIVING ME SOME ANSWERS, OR I'LL KICK YOUR ASS SO HARD YOU'LL BE PEELING IT OFF THE ENTIRE STATE.

YOU ARE LUCKY WE BROUGHT YOU HERE. WITHOUT OUR GUIDANCE, THE GIFT YOU NOW POSSESS WOULD BE WASTED ON YOU
YOUR BLOODLINE IS AN ANCIENT ONE, ESTACADO. A LONG TIME AGO, AN ANCESTOR OF YOURS BECAME THE FIRST MORTAL MAN TO WIELD THE DARKNESS...
"THERE ARE POWERS ON THIS EARTH THAT HAVE BEEN WITH US FOREVER. NO-ONE KNOWS IF THEY COME FROM OTHER WORLDS, OR PERHAPS WERE HANDED DOWN BY GODS--BUT EACH REQUIRES A HUMAN WIELDER, THAT THEIR MIGHT MAY BE EXPLOITED.
"THE WITCHBLADE IS A WARRIOR'S WEAPON. THE CURSED ANGELUS IS AN AGENT OF TYRANNICAL LAW AND ORDER.
"BUT GREATEST OF ALL IS THE ALMIGHTY DARKNESS, A GLORIOUS ENTITY OF CHAOS AND WILD ABANDON. ITS WIELDERS ARE BLESSED WITH THE POWER OF CREATION, AND CAN FORM WHATEVER SHAPES AND ENTITIES THEY CHOOSE..."
AS YOU HAVE ALREADY DISCOVERED, I BELIEVE, MUCH TO THE DETRIMENT OF THOMAS MARCHIANNI.
BEEN WATCHING ME, HUH? SO WHAT'S YOUR ANGLE ON ALL OF THIS?
OUR BROTHERHOOD WAS FORMED FIVE CENTURIES AGO, WHEN ONE OF YOUR FOREFATHERS SAILED TO THE AMERICAS FROM THE OLD WORLD.
PREVIOUS WIELDERS OF THE DARKNESS HAD SQUANDERED THEIR POWER ON PETTY PLEASURES, BUT MIGUEL ESTACADO WAS A MAN OF VISION...

"HE DREAMED OF A WORLD AT HIS COMMAND, A WORLD WHERE HE AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF FOLLOWERS HE FOUNDED WOULD BE TREATED LIKE GODS.
BUT MIGUEL ESTACADO COULD ONLY DREAM. FOR HALF A MILLENNIUM OUR BROTHERHOOD HAS TRIED TO BUILD THE PARADISE HE SOUGHT.
WE'VE BEEN THWARTED AGAIN AND AGAIN. THE ANGELUS GROWS EVER STRONGER. SEVERAL TIMES, THE WIELDERS OF THE DARKNESS HAVE BEEN UNSUITABLE, OR DIED BEFORE WE COULD PREPARE THEM.
BUT NOW WE HAVE YOU, ESTACADO. WITH YOU WE WILL NOT FAIL. WE WILL TRAIN YOU--AND GUIDE YOU--
AND YOU WILL GIVE US THE WORLD YOUR ANCESTOR DREAMED OF.
THE HELL I WILL.
"KINGS AND PRINCES WOULD BOW DOWN TO HIM. COUNTRIES, CONTINENTS WOULD OFFER UP THEIR RICHES. HE WOULD CONQUER THE HATED ANGELUS, BIND THE WITCHBLADE TO HIS SERVICE, RULE THE WORLD--"

I'VE GOT NO TIME AT ALL FOR A BUNCH OF GOOFS LIVING UNDER THE GODDAMN STATUE OF LIBERTY AND WANTING TO CHANGE THE WORLD. ANYTHING I DO WITH THIS DARKNESS IS GOING TO BE FOR ME AND ME ALONE, YOU GOT THAT?
DON'T BE FOOLISH, ESTACADO. YOU KNOW VERY LITTLE ABOUT THE POWER THAT YOU POSSESS. YOU NEED US TO TEACH YOU.
I THINK I CAN WORK IT OUT FOR MYSELF. I'M WALKING OUT OF YOUR HOLE, SONATINE.
BE SMART. STAY HEALTHY. DON'T TRY TO STOP ME.
IDIOT.
TAKE HIM.
YOUR FUNERAL-- UH?
LOOKING FOR THIS?
JUST LIKE BEFORE JACKIE
BUT YOU DON'T NEED A GUN JACKIE
ALL YOU GOTTA DO JACKIE

IS LET THE DARKNESS OUT

NO!

AAAIIEEE

EEEAAAGHH!

NOOOO!

HE'S COMING FOR US!

STAND YOUR GROUND, YOU WORM!

SEE SENSE, ESTACADO. I KNOW ENOUGH OF MAGIC TO PROTECT MYSELF.

YOU ***HAVE*** TO WORK WITH US, BOY. WE HAVE WAITED ALL YOUR LIFE FOR YOU TO COME OF AGE AND MANIFEST THE DARKNESS.

YOUR ***DESTINY*** LIES WITH US...

BULL.

THERE'S ONLY ONE MAN INVOLVED IN MY DESTINY--ME, SAME AS IT'S ALWAYS BEEN. ***NOBODY*** TELLS ME WHAT TO DO.

IF I EVER HEAR FROM YOU OR YOUR IDIOTS AGAIN, SONATINE:

I'LL COME BACK AND KILL YOU ALL.

WE--WE CAN'T JUST LET HIM GO, LORD!
WE HAVE NO CHOICE.
WE CAN'T CONTROL HIM. IF WE HAD PRESSED THE POINT, HE WOULD HAVE REALIZED HE COULD OVERWHELM MY MAGIC WITH EASE--AND THEN THE REST OF YOU WOULD ALL BE BUTCHERED.
HAVE HIM FOLLOWED. I WILL WAIT FOR HIM TO CALM A LITTLE, AND THEN TRY AGAIN TO MAKE HIM SEE REASON.
HE NEEDS US, WENDERS.
"HE THINKS HE HOLDS POWER WITHOUT LIMIT. HE IS NOT FAR FROM THE TRUTH, BUT EVEN THE DARKNESS HAS ITS WEAKNESS--AND ITS PRICE.
"IF HE ACTS RASHLY, EITHER ONE OF THEM COULD PROVE TO BE HIS DOWNFALL."

THAT'S MORE LIKE THE JACKIE ESTACADO I KNOW...
YEAH, ALL IS WELL AGAIN. AND I'VE GOT A FEELING THINGS ARE GONNA KEEP GETTING BETTER.
OH?
YEAH. I THINK THE ESTACADO FORTUNES ARE ABOUT TO HIT SOME PRETTY SPECTACULAR HEIGHTS, YOU KNOW?
YOU ALWAYS WERE LUCKY, JACKIE.
OH.
I ALWAYS WAS LUCKY.
YEAH, BUT THIS IS DIFFERENT. THIS IS A SHOT AT SOMETHING REALLY SPECIAL.
...BUT LOOK AT THIS, YOU'RE RIGHT.
HUH?

HI. YOU A MODEL?

HEY YEAH, HOW DID YOU KNOW?

JUST A GUESS. YOU EVER THINK ABOUT ACTING, MAYBE?

YEAH, I'D LOVE TO BE AN ACTRESS! HOW COULD YOU KNOW THAT ABOUT ME?

AH, IT'S LIKE THIS GIFT I GOT, YOU KNOW? I CAN LOOK AT A PERSON AND KIND OF INSTANTLY TELL A LOT ABOUT THEM.

SO LISTEN...

Kewsers

HE'S BEEN THERE TWENTY MINUTES, LORD SONATINE. IT'S VERY PUBLIC.

GOOD. HE'S LESS LIKELY TO OVERREACT IF THERE ARE PLENTY OF WITNESSES.

TOP OX

WE'LL SEE IF HE'S MORE AMENABLE NOW. I'M FIVE BLOCKS AWAY. BE SURE HE DOESN'T LEAVE.

YES, MY LORD.

...SO WE COULD PROBABLY GET YOU A PART ON THE SHOW. JUST A SMALL ROLE, BUT IT'S A START...

YEAH! WOULD I GET TO KISS MATT LEBLANC?

ONLY IF THE AUDITION GOES OKAY. OTHERWISE IT'S DAVID SCHWIMMER.

ANYWAY, BY A COMPLETE COINCIDENCE, MY APARTMENT'S JUST A SHORT CAB RIDE--

HEEHEHEEHE, I'LL JUST GET MY COAT...

WELL? WHERE IS HE?

HE USUALLY SITS AT THE BAR, LORD.

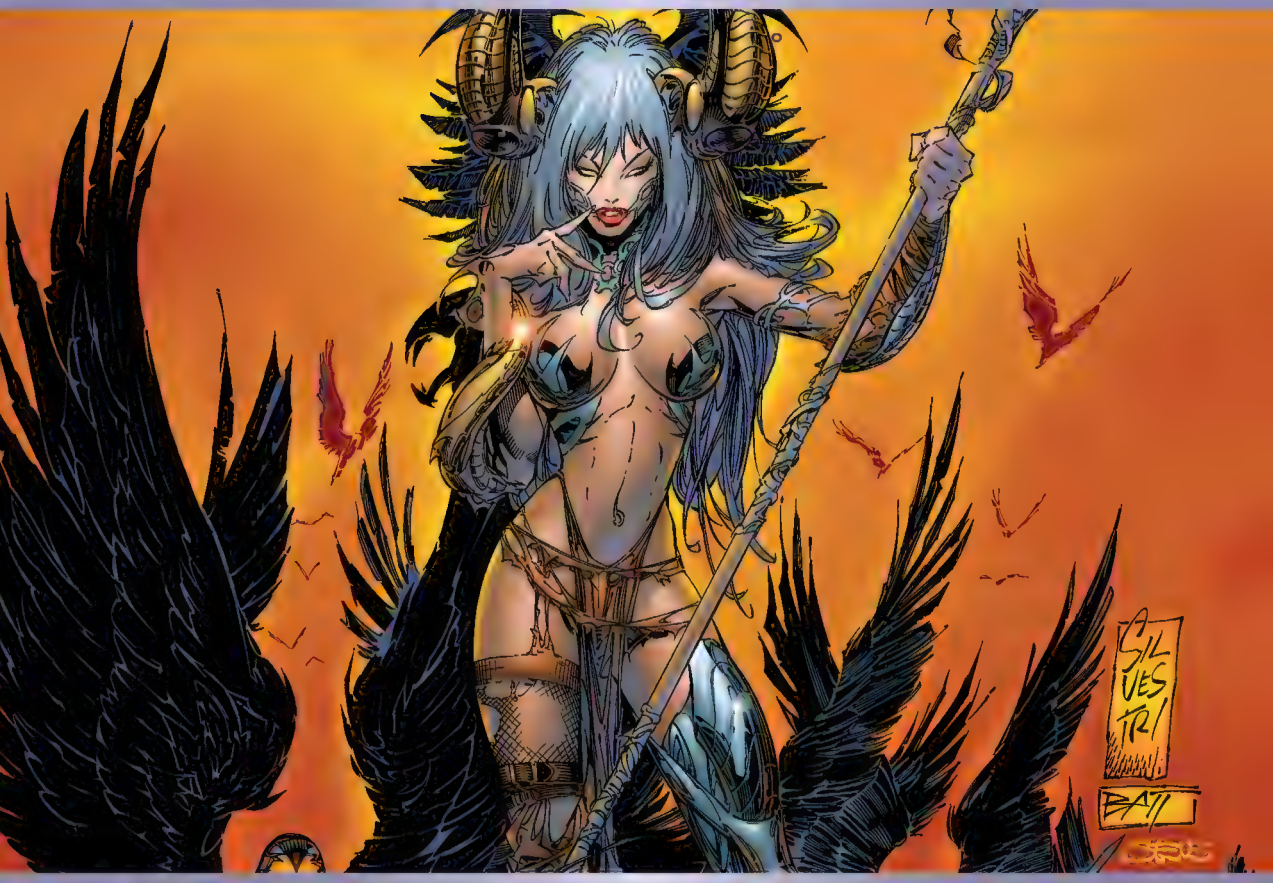
REALLY?

ER...

OH!

WHERE IS JACKIE ESTACADO?

AND HEY, I HAVE THIS GREAT VIEW OF THE PARK...
I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE IT!
RATES
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, GONE?
HE MET SOMEONE AND LEFT. WHAT'S IT TO YOU, ANYWAY? WHO ARE YOU?
MET SOMEONE? YOU MEAN A WOMAN?
NO, I MEAN CHEWBACCA THE WOOKIE. IT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS WHO HE--
OH MY GOD...!
HE'S GONE HOME WITH A WOMAN! HE'S A DEAD MAN! HE'S GOING TO WRECK EVERYTHING!
M-MY LORD?
WE HAVE TO FIND HIM, WENDERS! WE HAVE TO STOP HIM!
WE HAVE TO STOP HIM FROM HAVING SEX!!
TO BE CONTINUED...



ISSUE #3

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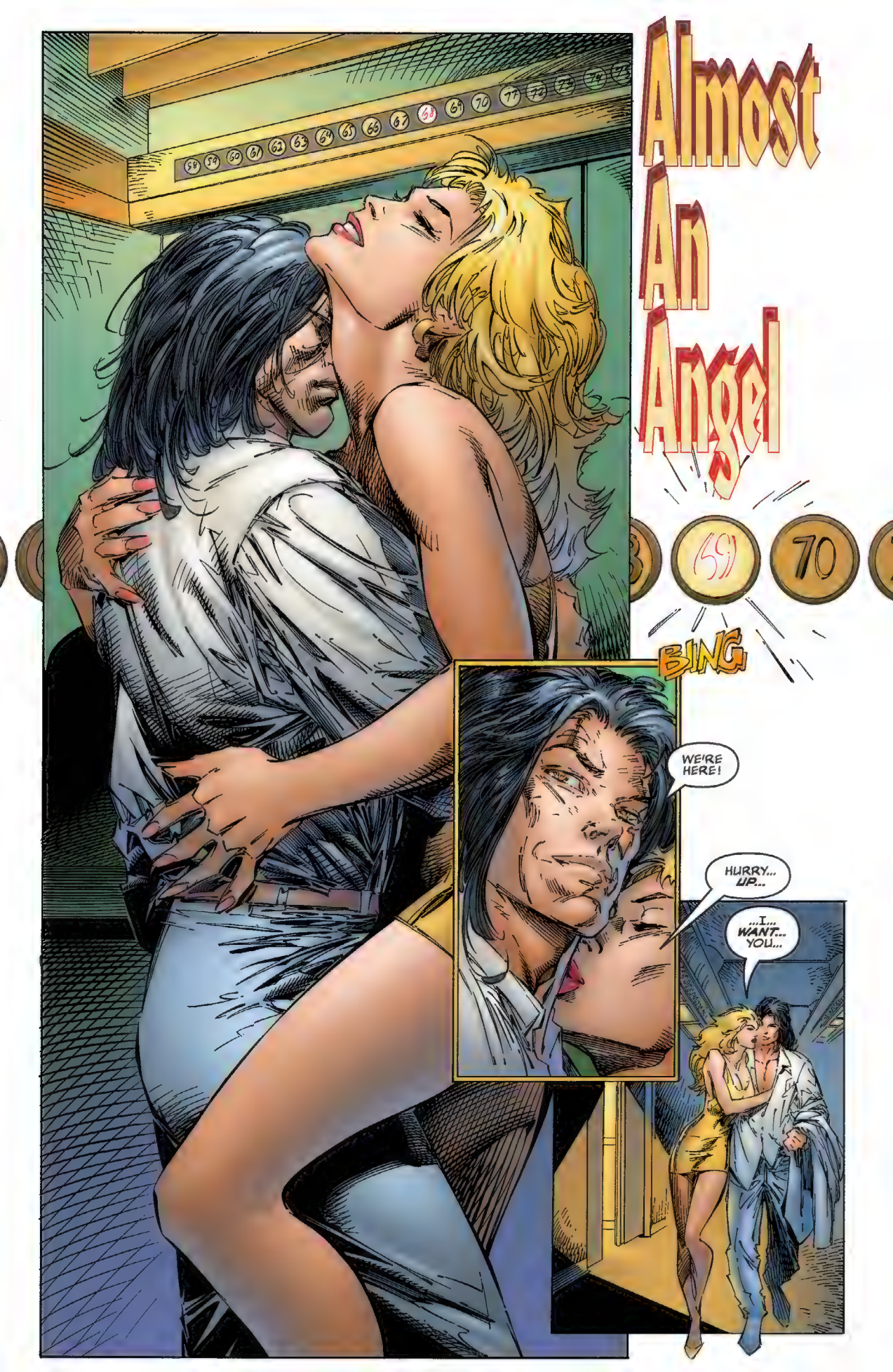
GET YOUR HANDS OFF ME! GET OFF!
QUIET, WENCH.
WENCH? WHAT D'YOU MEAN, WENCH? WHAT CENTURY ARE YOU LIVING IN, BOZO?
AND TELL THEM TO LET ME GO!
TAKE HER AWAY. THE PHOTOGRAPH FIRST. AND HAVE A TEAM MEET US AT ESTACADO'S.
YOU OKAY, JENNY? WHO IS THIS CREEP?
WHUH?
LISTEN.
YOUR MOTHER WAS A PROSTITUTE, YOUR FATHER WAS HER PIMP. START BELIEVING...
...NOW.

NO!
RIGHT, GET ON WITH IT.
WH-WH-WHAT'D YOU DO TO HIM?
REWROTE HIS MEMORY.
TREMENDOUS FUN.
SMILE!
AAAHH!
LOOK, FOR GOD'S SAKE, WHAT IS THIS? WHO ARE YOU? WHAT D'YOU WANT WITH JACKIE?
TO SAVE HIS LIFE.
IF HE BEDS THE WOMAN HE WENT HOME WITH, HE WILL DIE WITHIN THE HOUR.
TAKE HER.

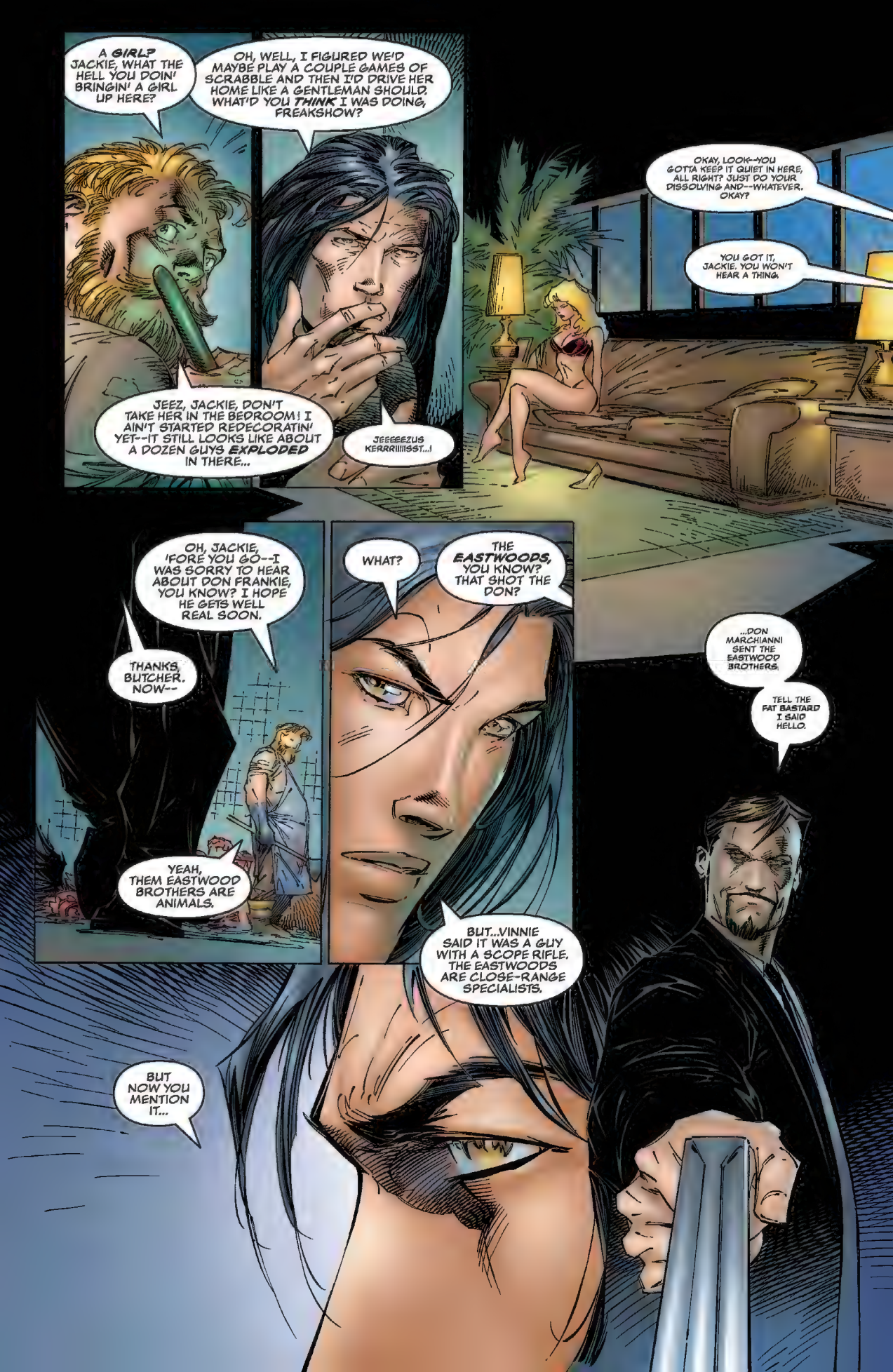

Almost An Angel
58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75
68 69 70
BING
WE'RE HERE!
HURRY... UP...
...I... WANT... YOU...

KLUNK!
...YOU HEAR THAT?
WHAT?
IN THE BATHROOM. LIKE A NOISE.
NOPE.
C'MERE...
NO, JUST GIMME A SECOND ON THIS, OKAY? I GOTTA GO SEE.
NO...!
IT'S OKAY, IT'S OKAY, I'M GONNA BE RIGHT BACK...YOU JUST HOLD ON AND--ER--
--JUST ONE SECOND, OKAY?

HI, JACKIE!
BUTCHER JOYCE?!
WHAT'S UP?
NOTHING!
I'LL BE RIGHT OUT!
SLAM!

...HE IS TO BE ISOLATED FROM THE WOMAN IMMEDIATELY. SHOOT HER IF YOU HAVE TO, I DON'T CARE.
GO.
MY LORD SONATINE, WE ARE SO TERRIBLY EXPOSED! SOMEONE COULD SEE YOU! YOU SHOULD BE BACK BELOW LIBERTY, DIRECTING THIS AFFAIR!
EXPOSED NOTHING. IF ESTACADO DIES TONIGHT, IT'S ANOTHER TWENTY-ONE YEARS SPENT CREEPING AROUND IN THAT CAVE AND WAITING FOR A NEW WORLD I'LL BE TOO OLD TO APPRECIATE...
UCCH!
AND DON'T EVER TELL ME WHAT I SHOULD BE DOING, YOU RANCID LITTLE TURD.
HEY! WHERE THE HELL D'YOU THINK YOU'RE--
YOU. LISTEN.
ON YOUR NIGHTS OFF YOU DRESS AS A WOMAN AND FIGHT CRIME. YOUR CHILDREN JUST FOUND OUT.
START BELIEVING NOW.
M-MY LORD?
I TAKE MY PLEASURES WHERE I FIND THEM, WENDERS.
AAAGGH!!
AAAGGH!!
AAAGGH!!

BUTCHER, WHAT THE HELL'RE YOU DOING HERE?
YOU SENT FOR ME, JACKIE. DON'T YOU REMEMBER?
VINNIE PALMIERI CALLED ME, SAID YOU HAD SOME STIFFS NEEDED TAKIN' CARE OF. I SAID FINE, I PICKED UP THE KEYS, I CAME RIGHT OVER...
GODDAMMIT, I CLEAN FORGOT...!
I GOTTA TELL YOU, JACKIE, THESE'RE SOME STRANGE FREAKIN' PEOPLE YOU BEEN WASTIN'.
I MEAN, I KNOW THIS IS A WEIRD KINDA WORLD WE LIVE IN, ALL THESE SUPERGUYS AN' STUFF, BUT I NEVER THOUGHT I'D HAVE TO CLEAN UP ANYTHIN' LIKE THIS.
STILL, LITTLE ACID DOES 'EM ALL, HUH? DISSOLVE 'EM, SCOOP UP THE SLUDGE, FLUSH 'EM DOWN THE JOHN-- THEY ALL GO THE SAME WAY IN THE END...
...'COURSE, SOME OF 'EM--HNNH-- NEED A LITTLE--HNNH-- PERSUADIN'--HNHH--
WILL YOU KEEP IT DOWN, FOR CRYIN' OUT LOUD? I GOT A GIRL OUT THERE!


A GIRL? JACKIE, WHAT THE HELL YOU DOIN' BRINGIN' A GIRL UP HERE?
OH, WELL, I FIGURED WE'D MAYBE PLAY A COUPLE GAMES OF SCRABBLE AND THEN I'D DRIVE HER HOME LIKE A GENTLEMAN SHOULD. WHAT'D YOU THINK I WAS DOING, FREAKSHOW?
JEEZ, JACKIE, DON'T TAKE HER IN THE BEDROOM! I AIN'T STARTED REDECORATIN' YET--IT STILL LOOKS LIKE ABOUT A DOZEN GUYS EXPLODED IN THERE...
JEEEEEZUS KERRRIIIISST...!
OKAY, LOOK--YOU GOTTA KEEP IT QUIET IN HERE, ALL RIGHT? JUST DO YOUR DISSOLVING AND--WHATEVER. OKAY?
YOU GOT IT, JACKIE. YOU WON'T HEAR A THING.
OH, JACKIE, 'FORE YOU GO--I WAS SORRY TO HEAR ABOUT DON FRANKIE, YOU KNOW? I HOPE HE GETS WELL REAL SOON.
THANKS, BUTCHER. NOW--
YEAH, THEM EASTWOOD BROTHERS ARE ANIMALS.
WHAT?
THE EASTWOODS, YOU KNOW? THAT SHOT THE DON?
...DON MARCHIANNI SENT THE EASTWOOD BROTHERS.
TELL THE FAT BASTARD I SAID HELLO.
BUT...VINNIE SAID IT WAS A GUY WITH A SCOPE RIFLE. THE EASTWOODS ARE CLOSE-RANGE SPECIALISTS.
BUT NOW YOU MENTION IT...

HOW DID YOU HEAR THEY GOT THE CONTRACT?
WORD ON THE STREET, JACKIE. YOU KNOW THOSE TWO, THEY AIN'T VERY DISCREET.
I DUNNO WHERE VINNIE HEARD THIS THING ABOUT SCOPE RIFLES, BUT...
BUTCHER, VINNIE WAS THERE WHEN UNCLE FRANKIE GOT SHOT.
YEAH? HELL, MAYBE I GOT IT WRONG OR SOMETHIN'. WOULDN'T BE THE FIRST TIME.
ENJOY THE REST OF YOUR EVENIN', OKAY?
MMM.
SORRY ABOUT THAT. THE PIPES IN THIS BUILDING ARE TERRIBLE.
I DON'T CARE.
OKAY, LISTEN THE BEDROOM'S KIND OF A MESS RIGHT NOW--
I DON'T CARE.
THANK YOU, GOD.
ESTACADO!
WHAT NOW?!

STAND AWAY FROM THE WOMAN! NOW!

YOU ARE SO DEAD I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU BOTHERED BEING BORN.

ESTACADO, I'M HERE TO SAVE YOUR LIFE!

WHAT?

LISTEN TO ME.

YOUR POWER IS PASSED ON AT THE MOMENT OF CONCEPTION. IT TRAVELS TO THE EGG WITH THE SPERM, AND AS LIFE BEGINS FOR THE NEW CHAMPION OF THE DARKNESS, IT ENDS FOR THE OLD. YOUR FATHER DIED THE INSTANT HE IMPREGNATED YOUR MOTHER. IF YOU HAD GONE MUCH FURTHER WITH THIS FEMALE...

...YOU WOULD HAVE DIED.

YEAH, RIGHT.

HKKK--!

FOR GOD'S SAKE-- WHY WOULD I--LIE--?

WHAT POSSIBLE ***ADVANTAGE*** IS THERE--IN STOPPING YOU-- HAVING-- ***SEX***--?

HMMM.

POINT.

WHUHH!

JACKIE, I HEARD SCREAMIN' --YOU NEED ANY HELP OUT HERE?
I'LL JUST LEAVE YOU TO IT, THEN!
SLAM!
WHERE WERE WE?
IT'S--URK-- IT'S AS I TOLD YOU. YOU CANNOT RISK FATHERING A CHILD.
YOU WILL DIE, AND ONCE AGAIN THE DARKNESS WILL LIE DORMANT, LOCKED IN A USELESS MORTAL'S BODY UNTIL THEY COME OF AGE AT TWENTY-ONE.
IF YOU HAD STAYED AND AND LISTENED EARLIER TODAY, INSTEAD OF STORMING OUT, I COULD HAVE TOLD YOU THIS.
I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THIS...
THESE GUYS ARE INSANE, JACKIE. SEND THEM AWAY, AND...LET'S GET ON WITH IT...

TAKING ALL THIS IN PRETTY GODDAMNED QUICKLY, AREN'T YOU?
MAYBE I'VE ONLY GOT ONE THING ON MY MIND, JACKIE...
MM.
YOU KNOW, I NEVER THOUGHT THE DAY WOULD COME WHEN I WOULD SAY THIS...
...BUT ALL OF A SUDDEN, I'M JUST NOT IN THE MOOD.
GET HER OUT OF HERE! NOW!
OKAY, YOU'RE SAYING I CAN'T GET ANYONE PREGNANT OR I'LL DIE, RIGHT? THAT ISN'T A PROBLEM.
NO?
NO. I'M ALREADY CAREFUL. ALL I'VE GOT TO DO NOW IS BE A LITTLE MORE CAREFUL.
AND YOU KNOW A FORM OF CONTRACEPTION THAT IS...ONE HUNDRED PERCENT ...EFFECTIVE?

WAS THAT ESTACADO?
YEP. SOUNDED LIKE THE HOWL OF A SOUL IN TORMENT, HUH?
NOOOOOO!
I HAVE FAILED YOU, MY LADY.
YOU HAVE.
THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY LEFT FOR YOU NOW.
ONLY... ONE?
MY LADY, I...I DO NOT WANT TO...TO *END* THIS WAY. I HAVE ENJOYED LIVING THESE BRIEF FEW HOURS, WALKING AS THE MORTALS DO.
IS THERE NO OTHER WAY?
WHO THE HELL IS SHE TALKING TO?
DO NOT ANGER THE ANGELUS BY FORGETTING YOUR PLACE, CREATION.
DO AS YOU ARE BID.

AS YOU WISH.
LISTEN HONEY, I DON'T KNOW IF YOU'RE TRIPPING OR WHAT, BUT HERE'S THE DEAL: YOU FORGET EVERYTHING YOU SAW TONIGHT AND YOU WALK OUT OF HERE A VERY RICH LITTLE GIRL, OKAY?
SOUND GOOD?
AAAAHH!!
NO.
NO.
NO.
THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING TO MEEEE...!
FOR GOD'S SAKE, ESTACADO, TRY AND CALM DOWN!
CALM DOWN? DON'T YOU REALIZE WHAT THIS MEANS? I CAN'T HAVE SEX OR I'LL DIE! ME! JACKIE ESTACADO!
I CAN'T HAVE SEX!
YOU ARE THE CHAMPION OF THE DARKNESS, ESTACADO. YOU'RE GOING TO FIND THERE'S A LOT MORE TO LIFE THAN FORNICATION.
OH YEAH? MAYBE ON YOUR HOME PLANET, BUT--
OH, GET A GRIP ON YOURSELF!
YES! I CAN SEE A LOT OF THAT IN MY FUTURE!
OH PLEASE-- LET IT BE A DREAM!

THE DARKNESS, THE GODDAMNED STUPID DARKNESS! I NEVER ASKED FOR IT, I NEVER WANTED IT...
YOU SEEMED KEEN ENOUGH WHEN YOU WERE USING IT TO MURDER THOMAS MARCHIANNI. AND SEVERAL OF MY FOLLOWERS, COME TO THINK OF IT.
THAT WAS BEFORE I KNEW ABOUT THE LOUSY CELIBACY CLAUSE! PLEASE, JUST LET THE GROUND OPEN UP AND SWALLOW ME RIGHT NOW...
THE ELEVATOR'S BACK. I'LL CHECK ON THE MEN.
DING!
WELL? DID YOU GET RID OF HER?
ER...
LORD SONATINE! ANGELUS WARRIOR! HERE!

KILL IT, ESTACADO! IT'S HERE FOR YOU!

SO?

IT'S WELCOME TO CUT MY GODDAMNED HEAD OFF, IF THAT'S WHAT IT WANTS. LIFE WITHOUT WOMEN JUST ISN'T WORTH LIVING.

NO! YOU CAN STILL DO IT!

ESTACADO, YOU DON'T HAVE TO GIVE UP SEX!!

THE MAGIC WORDS.

NOW, THEN...
NOOOO!
JACKIE, PLEEEEASE... I WAS GOING TO MAKE IT SO NICE FOR YOU...
...DON'T HURT MEEE...
GIVE ME A BREAK.
BRAVO.
BRAVO, MY ASS. LET'S HEAR IT.
AS I TOLD YOU, WOMEN ARE OFF LIMITS TO YOU. THEY'RE EFFECTIVELY A DEATH SENTENCE.
MORTAL WOMEN, THAT IS.

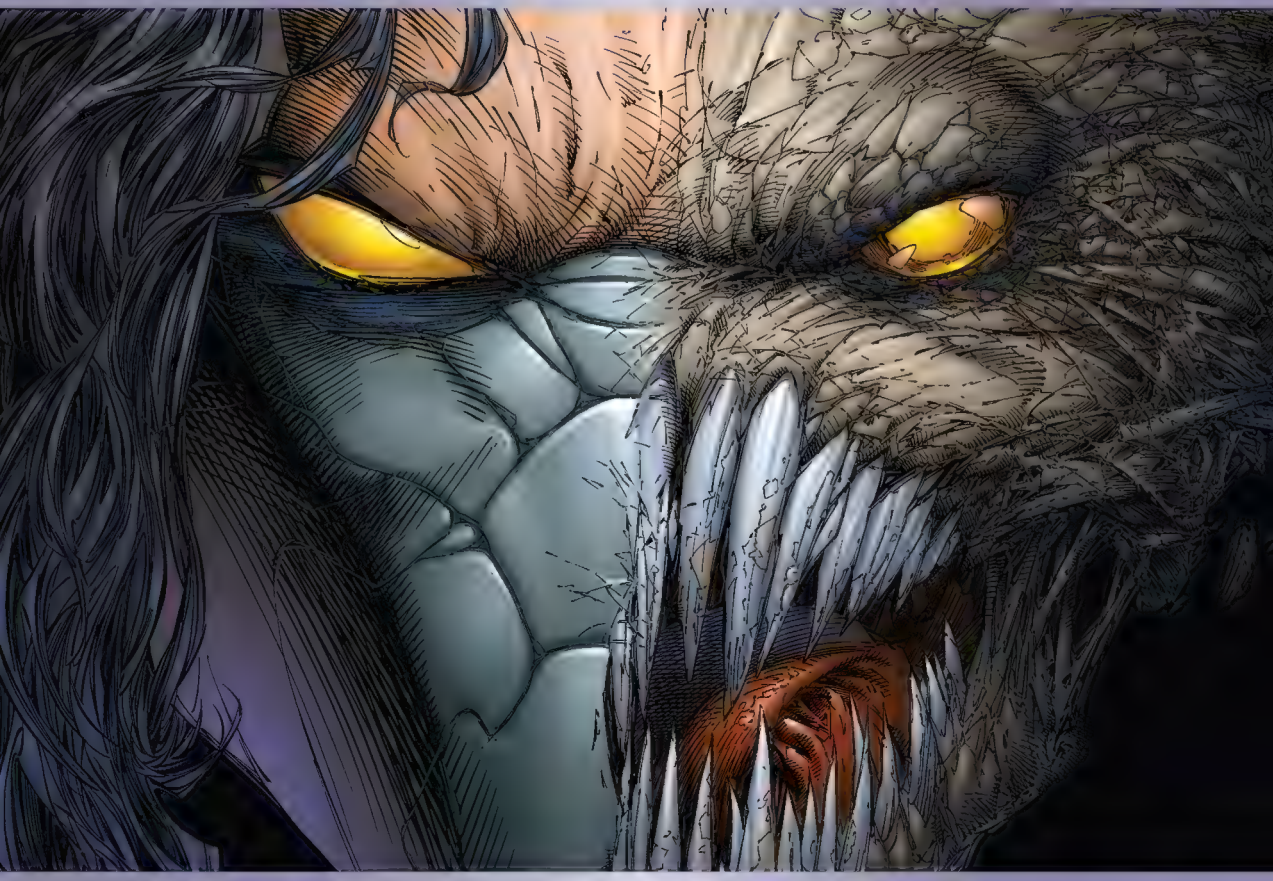
YOU COULD CREATE AS MANY WOMEN FROM THE DARKNESS AS YOU DESIRE.
I COULD?
THE ANCIENT LORDS OF DARKNESS KNEW THIS SECRET. THEY HAD FABULOUS OTHERWORDLY COURTESANS ATTENDING TO THEIR LUSTS: FANTASY CREATURES WHOSE TOUCH BROUGHT PLEASURES INDESCRIBABLE...
...COME WITH ME, JACKIE ESTACADO. BECOME THE LORD OF THE BROTHERHOOD OF DARKNESS, LEAD US TO OUR PROMISED LAND--AND I WILL TEACH YOU HOW THESE WOMEN CAN BE YOURS.
I ALREADY TOLD YOU I DON'T WANT ANY PART OF YOUR BROTHERHOOD OF GOOFBALLS, YOU LITTLE MAGGOT.
TELL ME WHAT I WANT TO KNOW ANYWAY, AND MAYBE I WON'T CUT YOU OPEN FROM CROTCH TO THROAT.
HOW ABOUT, IF THE MEN HOLDING THIS WOMAN DON'T HEAR FROM ME EVERY HOUR ON THE HOUR--WELL, DO I EVEN HAVE TO COMPLETE THIS SENTENCE?
JENNY...!
GOOD.
WENDERS, TELL THE DRIVER WE'RE GOING ON A LONG TRIP.
ISN'T SHE DEAD YET?
ME, MY LADY?
ALMOST. HER EYES ARE GONE, BUT WE STILL HEAR WHAT SHE HEARS.
IT'S ENOUGH. I THINK I KNOW WHAT SONATINE IS PLANNING. FOLLOW THEM, THAT I MAY WATCH THEIR PROGRESS.
YOU WILL BE QUITE SAFE. YOU KNOW I WOULD NOT RISK YOU, MY SWEET.
I WILL COME WITH THE WARRIORS WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT.

"SONATINE IS PLAYING RIGHT INTO MY HANDS."
THE ANGELUS IS AS CUNNING AS EVER.
THAT WARRIOR YOU DESTROYED BACK THERE, IT WAS SENT TO SEDUCE YOU. IT WOULD HAVE GOTTEN PREGNANT --YOU WOULD HAVE GOTTEN DEAD.
I COULD HAVE KNOCKED IT UP? EVEN IF IT WASN'T MORTAL?
IT WOULD HAVE BEEN MADE MORTAL FOR THE PURPOSE. THE ANGELUS HAS NO QUALMS ABOUT SPENDING HER SERVANTS' LIVES.
SO...I COULD CREATE A REAL WOMAN? A LIVING, BREATHING ONE, NOT JUST A CONSTRUCT?
YOU COULD IF YOU HAD A CENTURY OR TWO IN WHICH TO STUDY THE MINUTIAE OF HUMAN ANATOMY. THE ANGELUS HAS ALL THE TIME SHE WANTS: SHE PASSES HER POWER ON WHEN SHE DECIDES, NOT AT CONCEPTION, AS WITH THE DARKNESS.
THE CURRENT ANGELUS IS NINE HUNDRED AND NINETY YEARS OLD.
SOUNDS LIKE THE OPPOSITION HOLDS ALL THE CARDS, SONATINE.
BOTH POWERS HAVE THEIR UPS AND DOWNS.
WE'RE HERE.
AND WHERE THE HELL IS HERE?

HERE IS WHERE I HAVE YOU AT MY MERCY.
THE DARKNESS DOESN'T WORK IN DAYLIGHT.
TRY IT IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME.
WHAT THE HELL--?
NOW, TAKE A LOOK AROUND YOU ON THIS GLORIOUS MIDWINTER MORNING. SEE IF YOU CAN FIND EVEN A SHADOW TO HIDE IN...
...AND THEN TELL ME WHO'S BOSS.
MY LADY?
I SEE MY SWEET.
I AM COMING.

I AM GOING TO TEACH YOU THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW, ESTACADO, WHEN YOU UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING ABOUT YOUR POWER: *THEN* YOU WILL BE READY.
READY TO DO MY BIDDING...
AND WHY SHOULD I EVEN LISTEN TO WORD ONE, EXACTLY?
BECAUSE WE HAVE THE WOMAN. I DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT YOU--WITH YOUR COLD HEART AND YOUR ALMOST TOTAL SELFISHNESS--YOU CARE, ABOUT HER.
AND ALSO, OF COURSE, BECAUSE YOU ARE CURRENTLY SO UTTERLY VULNERABLE.
INDEED HE IS, SONATINE.
AND FOR THAT YOU HAVE MY ETERNAL GRATITUDE.

ANGELUS!!
AND I CAN'T DO JACK ABOUT IT. NICE GOING, SONATINE.
YOU'VE KILLED US ALL.
TO BE CONTINUED...



ISSUE #4

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YOU WILL ALL DIE.
SONATINE, YOUR DEATH WILL MEAN THE END OF THE BROTHERHOOD. THEY ARE BUT GOONS AND LICKSPITTLES, HELD ON COURSE BY YOUR CONNIVING WILL. WITHOUT THEIR LEADER, THEY WILL CRUMBLE.
BUT YOU, ESTACADO: YOUR DEATH WILL CHANGE THE WORLD.
THE DARKNESS WILL DIE WITH YOU, LOCKED WITHIN THE SEED THAT YOU WILL NEVER PASS ON. YOU ARE ITS LAST WIELDER. HERE IN THE DAYLIGHT YOU ARE AT MY MERCY.
WITH YOU GONE, I WILL TURN MY ENERGIES TO BETTER THINGS: I WILL REMAKE THIS WORLD TO MY DESIGN, UNTIL ALL IS LIGHT AND LAW AND LOVE FOR EVER AFTER...
LET ME GUESS: YOUR LIGHT. YOUR LAW.
AND LOVE FOR ONLY YOU.
OF COURSE. I AM GOING TO RULE THIS WORLD, SONATINE.

I MAY AS WELL BE WORSHIPPED BY IT, TOO.

BROUGHT TO LIGHT

YOU GOT US INTO THIS, SONATINE. THOUGHT OF ANY BRILLIANT IDEAS TO GET US OUT?

YES, ACTUALLY. I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT DEFEAT THE BITCH WITH WITHERING SARCASM, SEEING AS IT'S THE ONLY THING YOU'RE ANY GOOD AT...

OH MY GOD, WE'RE ALL GOING TO DIE!

CONTROL YOURSELF, WENDERS.

I SUPPOSE THE ANGELUS IS BULLETPROOF, LIKE HER WARRIORS?

B-B-BUT--

EVEN MORE SO. THE ONLY ONE OF THEM REMOTELY SUSCEPTIBLE TO GUN-FIRE WOULD BE THE FAMILIAR HOVERING BESIDE HER...

YEAH?

MMM. AS I TOLD YOU, BOTH YOU AND THE ANGELUS CAN CREATE MORTAL COMPANIONS...

...AND THAT ONE IS MOST ***DEFINITELY*** MORTAL; PRESUMABLY OUR OPPONENT'S LOVER OR CONFIDANTE.

WELL THEN-- ***JESUS!***

WAAAGGHH!!

I WANTED TO BE SURE I HAD YOUR COMPLETE ATTENTION.

TIME'S UP.

LIKE HELL! GIMME!
BLAM! BLAM!
BLAM! BLAM!
EEEEIIIIGGGHH!
NO!!
NO! SAVE HER! CATCH HER!
HEEEELLP!
WAAGGHH!

NOW, THEN...!
AAA--!
NOOO!!
HURT HER AND YOU'RE DEAD, ESTACADO! HARM ONE HAIR ON HER HEAD AND I'LL HUNT YOU TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH AND RIP OUT YOUR LIVING SOUL!!
WELL, WE'RE GONNA SEE ABOUT THAT.
LOOKS LIKE YOU PUT A LOT OF TIME AND EFFORT INTO TWINKLETOES, HERE. CALL OFF THE FLYING GOOFBALLS AND KEEP YOUR DISTANCE, OR I'LL TURN HER NECK INTO A GODDAMNED FOUNTAIN: GUARANTEED.
LET HER GO, DAMN YOU! GIVE HER BACK TO ME!
NOT JUST YET...
WENDERS! GET THE CAR!

WATCH HER. GET READY TO GO.
YOU'LL NEVER-- GET AWAY WITH--
SHUT UP!
I HAVE BEEN ANGELUS SINCE THE TIME OF KING ARTHUR. I HAVE SLAIN EVERY WIELDER OF THE DARKNESS WHO DARED TO USE HIS MEASLY POWER AGAINST ME. SOON--VERY SOON--
--YOU WILL JOIN THEM.
A POX ON YOU, ESTACADO!
WE'LL BE IN TOUCH JUST AS SOON AS WE THINK UP SOME DEMANDS THAT'LL REALLY PISS YOU OFF..
SOUNDS TO ME LIKE YOU'VE HAD IT EASY UP TO NOW, SISTER.
BE SEEING YOU.

BACK TO THE CITY, WENDERS. TO LIBERTY ISLAND.
WHOA...
TOP COW
YOU'RE NOT TAKING ME BACK TO YOUR MISERABLE HOLE, SONATINE. NOT AFTER THIS.
NOTHING HAS CHANGED. WE STILL HAVE THE GIRL.
WHATSERNAME, JENNY, IS BEING HELD WHERE YOU WILL NEVER FIND HER. I AM MORE THAN WILLING TO MAKE GOOD ON MY PREVIOUS THREAT.
WHAT IS SHE TO YOU ANYWAY, ESTACADO? WHAT DOES A MURDEROUS THUG LIKE YOU CARE FOR ANYONE, NEVERMIND A NONENTITY LIKE HER?
SHE'S--
NEVERMIND WHAT SHE IS. I SAVED YOUR LIFE BACK THERE, REMEMBER?
YES, I NOTICED. THANKS VERY MUCH.

I KNOW YOU'VE GOT BIG PLANS FOR ME AND THE DARKNESS--AND THAT'S COOL. IF I'M GOING TO HAVE THIS POWER, IT MAKES SENSE TO LEARN TO MAKE THE MOST OF IT.
JUST THINK ABOUT THIS...
RIGHT NOW YOU'RE HOLDING ALL THE ACES. YOU'VE GOT JENNY, SO I CAN'T DO SQUAT. YOU'VE GOT OUR LITTLE PLAYMATE HERE, SO EVEN THE ANGELUS CAN'T TOUCH YOU.
I'LL COME WITH YOU, AND TOGETHER WE'LL BUILD THIS BETTER WORLD YOU WANT--ALL I'M ASKING IS A LITTLE TIME TO TAKE CARE OF BUSINESS IN THE LIFE I'M LEAVING BEHIND.
ONE DAY, SONATINE. COME ON, I SAVED YOUR ASS AND I GOT YOU A VERY USEFUL HOSTAGE. YOU OWE ME THAT MUCH.
JUST TWENTY-FOUR HOURS...
...THEN I'M YOURS.
DEAL?
DEAL.

FIND THEM!

THE SUN IS SETTING! ESTACADO'S POWER IS HIS ONCE MORE! EVERY MINUTE HE SURVIVES BURNS AT MY SOUL!

SCOUR THIS CURSED CITY! FIND THEM ALL!

SONATINE AND ESTACADO WILL BE MADE TO SUFFER! MY DARLING WILL BE RETURNED TO ME, OR I WILL BURN THIS WORLD TO ASH!

NOW GO! GO!!

BRING HER BACK TO MEEEE!!

EASTWOOD BROTHERS STILL DRINK HERE?
WHO?
THE EASTWOODS.
NEVER HEARDA THEM.
I'M TRYING TO BE NICE ABOUT THIS.
IDDA BAG PLAYD POOL.
THANKS.
YOUR SHOT, HUH...?
YEAH...
YEAH...

SWELL...
YEAH...
DINK
YEAH...
RECKON A MAN COULD GET MIGHTY TIRED OF MISSING...
YEAH...
YEAH...
SEEMS TO ME AS HOW POOL'S A STUPID GAME, ANYWAY...
YEAH...
YEAH...
MARVELOUS...
YEAH...
YEAH...
KEVIN AND TREVOR EASTWOOD? I'M LOOKING FOR A COUPLE OF IDIOT HITMEN WHO GO AROUND PRETENDING TO BE DIRTY HARRY.
SOUND FAMILIAR?
AND WHO MIGHT YOU BE...?

I'M A BIG FAN.
OH MY GOD, NO! DON'T KILL US!
OUR NAME'S NOT EVEN EASTWOOD! IT'S POZNOWSKI!
SHUT UP.
YOU TWO TRIED TO TAKE OUT FRANKIE FRANCHETTI LAST WEEK. DON'T BOTHER TO DENY IT.
WHAT I WANT TO KNOW IS, WHO'S THE TRAITOR IN THE DON'S ORGANIZATION?
WHO GOT YOU CLOSE ENOUGH TO MAKE THE HIT?
W-W-WE REALLY CAN'T TELL YOU--
HOLY JEEZ!

CAN YOU TELL ME, TREVOR...?
YEHHHSS--!
FIVE SECONDS LATER
I FIND THAT PRETTY DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE.
S'TRUE, I--SWEAR TA GOD--
C'MON, MAN--I FREAKIN' TOLD YOU--
YOU ALSO PUT A BULLET IN MY UNCLE FRANKIE'S CHEST.
HNNNNHH!
CAN YOU FEEL THAT, TREVOR?
IT'S THE DARKNESS.
IT'S SLIDING IT'S FINGERS INSIDE YOU...DOWN YOUR THROAT...WRAPPING THEM 'ROUND YOUR SKELETON...
IT'S PULLING MUSCLE OFF BONE AND SKIN AWAY FROM MEAT... UNTIL YOU'RE READY, TREVOR...
UNTIL YOU GO...

POP!!
SORRY ABOUT THE MESS BACK THERE.
I DREAD TO THINK.

WHY DOES ESTACADO CARE ABOUT YOU...?
MMM?
COME ON, FOR A MOB ENFORCER--FOR DON FRANCHETTI'S TOP KILLER TO WORRY ABOUT A DULL LITTLE THING LIKE YOU ENOUGH THAT HE'LL LET ME USE YOU AGAINST HIM--THAT TAKES SOMETHING SPECIAL...
YOU'RE NOT LOVERS, YOU'RE NOT BROTHER AND SISTER. WHAT ARE YOU?
NONE OF YOUR DAMN BUSINESS.
WRONG.
WAAAH--!

WE... WE GREW UP TOGETHER.
"WE WERE BOTH ORPHANS. MY MOM DIED WHEN I WAS TWO MONTHS OLD. BAD HEROIN. WHAT JACKIE'S STORY WAS, I DON'T KNOW AND NEITHER DID HE...
"BUT WE WERE ENROLLED AT SAINT GERALD'S AT THE SAME HOUR OF THE SAME DAY. THE NURSES TOLD ME LATER...I THINK THEY THOUGHT IT WAS SWEET.
"MAYBE THAT WAS WHY JACKIE FELT SO CLOSE TO ME. WHY HE PROTECTED ME. I WAS THE FIRST PERSON HE FELT ANYTHING FOR..."
YOU AND YOU ALONE, I SUPPOSE HE LEARNED TO BE A SELFISH BASTARD LATER.
TELL ME ABOUT THE ORPHANAGE...
"I REMEMBER...GETTING BEATEN UP BY MONKS A LOT..."
YOU! GIRL! TWELVE DIVIDED BY THREE!
ER... SIX?
WRONG!
WAAAGGH!!

SON OF A BITCH!
AAAIIIEEE!
THEY BEAT THE HELL OUT OF HIM WHEN HE DID THAT KIND OF STUFF, BUT HE DIDN'T CARE. ANYONE TOUCHED ME, JACKIE WOULDN'T STOP UNTIL HE PUT THEM IN THE HOSPITAL.
THIS ONE MONK REALLY HATED HIM. HE'D SAY--"YOU'RE NOTHING, ESTACADO. YOU'RE GONNA GROW UP TO BE JUST ANOTHER PENNILESS BUM IN THE GUTTER..."
AND JACKIE WOULD LOOK HIM IN THE EYE AND SAY--
I'LL NEVER BE LIKE THAT.
"AND HE WAS RIGHT. I'LL NEVER FORGET THE DAY DON FRANCHETTI CAME TO GET HIM..."
JACKIE ESTACADO, GET YOUR STUFF, KID. YOU'RE LEAVIN'.

YOU CAN'T JUST WALK IN HERE AND TAKE THIS BOY!
LOUIE, JOE... HELP BROTHER TOO-DUMB-TO-BE-TRUE WITH HIS LITTLE PROBLEM, WILL YOU?
WHO ARE YOU?
I'M YER UNCLE FRANKIE, KID. I BEEN LOOKIN' FOR YOU A LONG TIME.
YOU'RE COMIN' TO LIVE WITH ME NOW, OKAY?
"CAN JENNY COME TOO?"
" 'FRAID NOT. BUT YOU CAN STILL VISIT HER, IF YOU WANT."
JACKIE CAME OVER AND TOOK MY HANDS. HE WAS SO SERIOUS... SO OLD...HE SAID-- "I'LL ALWAYS COME BACK FOR YOU, JENNY."
THEN HE HELD ME TIGHT.
ALWAYS.
"AND HE DID."
LET ME SEE IF I CAN GUESS THE REST...

HE DOES COME BACK, REGULARLY. HE CHECKS UP ON YOU, MAKE SURE NO ONE'S HURTING YOU. EVENTUALLY HE GETS YOU THE JOB IN THE NIGHTCLUB.
YOU WATCH HIM GROW UP INTO A RUTHLESS MURDERER, A MADE MAN, A WOMANISING WASTREL...
...BUT YOU DON'T CARE BECAUSE YOU'RE IN LOVE WITH HIM.
AND EVERY NIGHT YOU STAND BEHIND THAT BAR AND YOU WATCH HIM WALK OUT WITH ANOTHER POINTLESS BIMBO, AND IT JUST ABOUT BREAKS YOUR HEART...
HEY, KNOCK IT OFF!
BUT EVEN THOUGH YOU WISH MORE THAN ANYTHING THAT IT COULD BE YOU, YOU'LL NEVER PLUCK UP THE COURAGE TO TELL HIM BECAUSE HE'D NEVER WANT YOU, NOT LIKE THAT, NOT THE SILLY LITTLE THING HE GREW UP WITH...
SO YOU HAVE TO SETTLE FOR JUST GOOD FRIENDS. ALL TOGETHER NOW:
AAWWWW...!
...
YOU REALLY ARE VERMIN, AREN'T YOU?
THANK YOU, MY DEAR.
I DO MY BEST.

HOW'S HE DOIN', VINNIE?
WHA--?
JACKIE! JEEZ, YOU GAVE ME A SHOCK!
UH, NO CHANGE IN THE DON. NURSES SAY HE'S STABLE. ALL WE CAN DO IS WAIT TO SEE IF HE COMES OUT OF IT.
MMM.
HOW ABOUT YOU? BUTCHER JOYCE TOLD ME HE FINISHED FIXIN' UP YOUR PLACE. HELL OF A WORKER, AIN'T HE?
YEP.
SO I WAS TALKING TO THE EASTWOODS TONIGHT...
KLIK

SET THE OLD GUY UP, HUH?

YEP, ARRANGED IT WITH THE EASTWOODS, THEN SENT THE BOYS ON THEIR BREAK. NO ONE THERE TO TAKE A BULLET FOR FRANKIE WHEN THE TIME CAME.

WHY?

'CAUSE TOMMY MARCHIANNI GAVE ME A MILLION BUCKS, WHY THE HELL DO YOU *THINK?*

I DIDN'T KNOW THAT, VINNIE. I HAD THE CRAZY IDEA THE DON COULD TRUST YOU, WHAT WITH US ALL HAVING BEEN FRIENDS FOR YEARS...

NO.

BUT IT MAKES THINGS A WHOLE LOT EASIER.

WHAT?

JACKIE, JACKIE, WAKE THE HELL UP, WILL YOU? WE'RE IN THE GODDAMN MAFIA HERE! ***FRIENDS*** ONLY COUNTS WHEN WE AIN'T DOIN' BUSINESS--

--AN' ***WE'RE ALWAYS DOIN' BUSINESS.***

YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO BE THIS STUPID, KID. COME ON, YOU ***KNOW*** I'M RIGHT...

LONG WAY ***DOWN,*** VINNIE.

GROUND LOOKS ***HARD,*** VINNIE.

AND YOU KNOW ***WHAT,*** VINNIE?

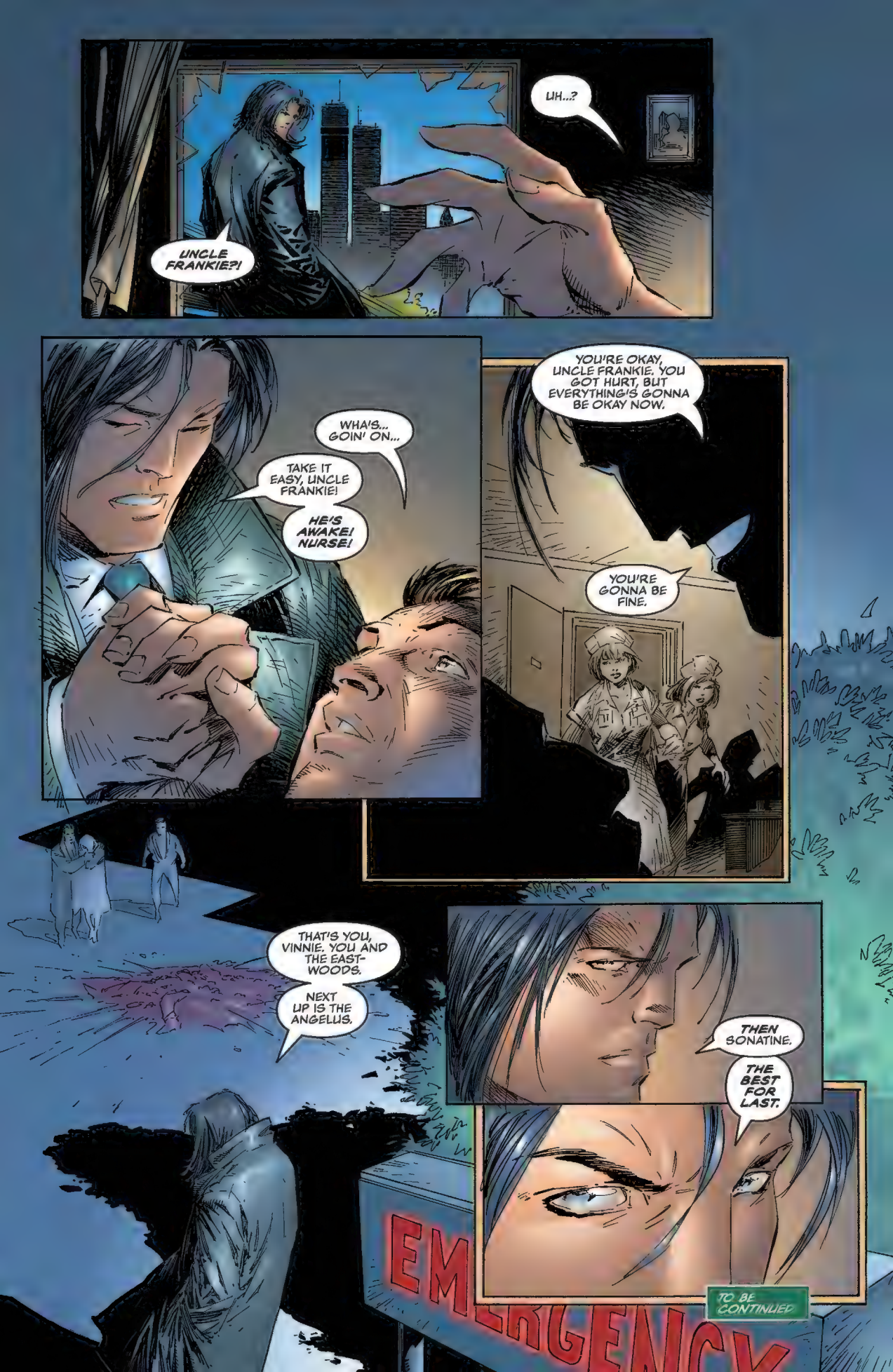
IT DOESN'T END THERE.

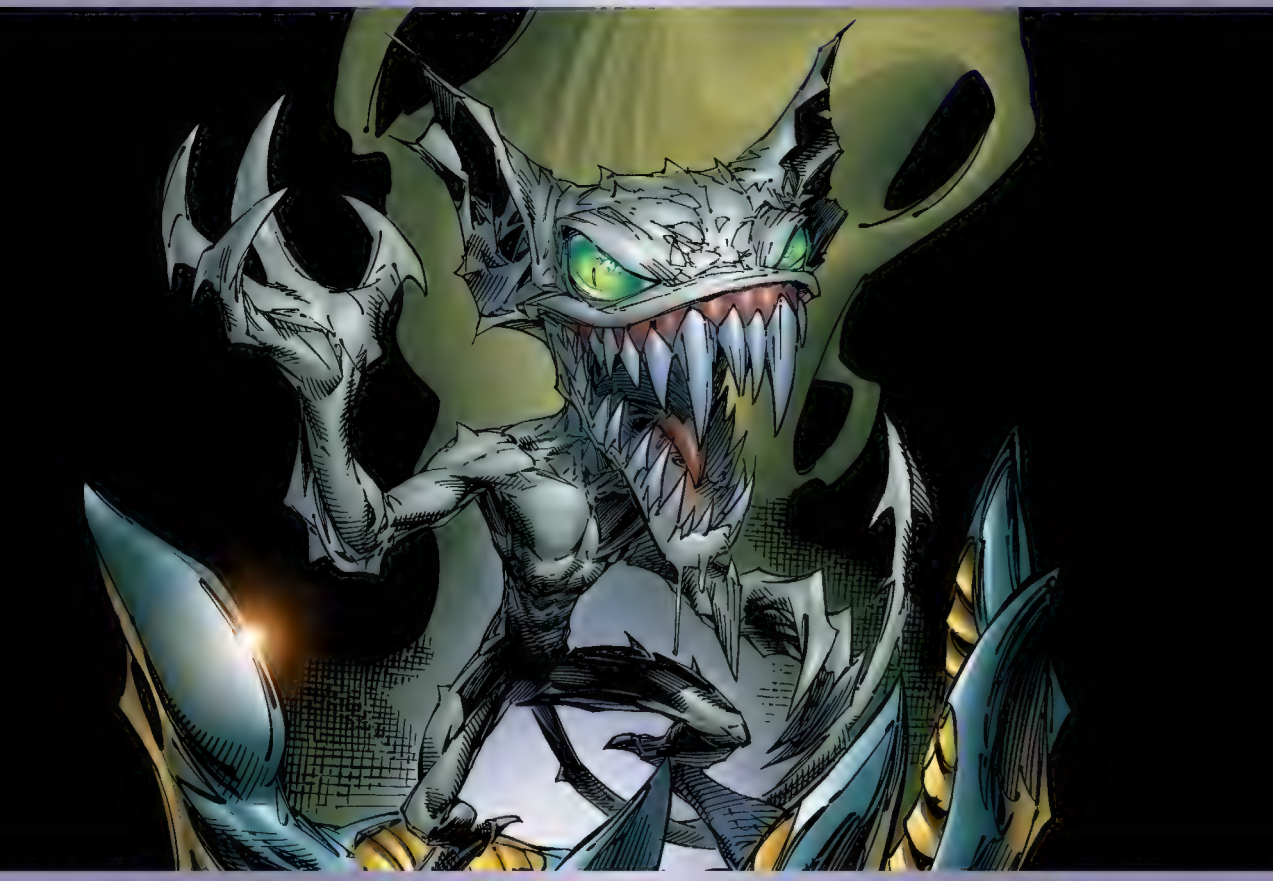
WE'VE SEEN THE OTHER ***SIDE,*** VINNIE.

HAVE FUN IN ***HELL,*** VINNIE.

WHAT'S THAT YOU ***SAY,*** VINNIE?

IS POOR VINNIE ***SCARED?***


UH...?
UNCLE FRANKIE?!
WHA'S... GOIN' ON...
TAKE IT EASY, UNCLE FRANKIE!
HE'S AWAKE! NURSE!
YOU'RE OKAY, UNCLE FRANKIE. YOU GOT HURT, BUT EVERYTHING'S GONNA BE OKAY NOW.
YOU'RE GONNA BE FINE.
THAT'S YOU, VINNIE. YOU AND THE EAST-WOODS.
NEXT UP IS THE ANGELUS.
THEN SONATINE.
THE BEST FOR LAST.
EMERGENCY
TO BE CONTINUED



ISSUE #5

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MR. FRANCHETTI, STOP THAT AT ONCE!
EMERGENCY
THERE IS NO SMOKING IN THIS HOSPITAL! AND EVEN IF THERE WERE, A MAN IN YOUR CONDITION SHOULDN'T BE SMOKING THAT ENORMOUS CIGAR!
HUH?
PUT IT OUT AT ONCE!
HELL, DOC, CAN'T YOU MAKE AN EXCEPTION?
OF COURSE NOT! WHY ON EARTH WORLD I?
'CAUSE IF YOU DON'T, I'M GONNA HAVE A COUPLA MY BOYS PAINT YOUR CROTCH WITH ANISEED AN' THROW YOU IN THE POLAR BEAR ENCLOSURE IN THE CENTRAL PARK ZOO.
A-A-ANISEED? ISN'T THAT FOR DOGS?
BEARS, TOO.
BELIEVE ME.

HEY, JACKIE! HOW THE HELL ARE YA, KID?
HEY, UNCLE FRANKIE.
YOU LOOK A LOT BETTER ALREADY...
TAKES MORE'N TWO BULLETS INNA CHEST TO WIPE OUT FRANKIE FRANCHETTI! I HEAR YOU GOT THE PUKES THAT DID IT?
UNCLE FRANKIE, THERE'S SOMETHING I NEED TO ASK YOU ABOUT. I KNOW YOU'RE NOT FEELING TOO GOOD RIGHT NOW, BUT I HAVE TO KNOW THIS.
I WANT YOU TO TELL ME ABOUT MY FATHER.
VINNIE, TOO.
YEAH, OL' VINNIE. WHO'DA THOUGHT IT?
AND THIS TIME I WANT THE *TRUTH.*

...WELL.
I GUESS YOU AIN'T BUYIN' THAT OL' STORY ABOUT YOUR POP BEIN' MY BROTHER-IN-LAW NO MORE, HUH?
NO. I NEVER HAD REASON TO DOUBT IT BEFORE...
BUT THINGS HAVE HAPPENED.
UH-HUH.
THE REASON I NEVER TOLD YOU THIS BEFORE WAS... I GUESS 'CAUSE IT'S KINDA WIERD, JACKIE. THERE'S PARTS OF IT I STILL CAN'T GET STRAIGHT IN MY HEAD. THINGS I SAW, OR... I THOUGHT I SAW...
BUT THE FACT IS, YOUR FATHER WAS A STONE-COLD MOTHERLOVIN' PSYCHO.
AN' BELIEVE ME, YOU'RE BETTER OFF NEVER HAVIN' MET THE SON OF A BITCH.
HIS NAME WAS DANNY ESTACADO.
HE DID HITS.

APOCALYPSE SHORTLY

"BUT HE DID 'EM LIKE NO ONE ELSE EVER DID, BEFORE OR SINCE."

THEY USED TO SAY THAT IF ESTACADO WAS COMIN' FOR YOU, BEST THING YOU COULD DO WAS CUT YOUR THROAT AN' HOPE TO HIDE IN HELL.

HE WAS A FRIGGIN' ANIMAL. THE GUYS HE WHACKED, IT WASN'T ENOUGH FOR HIM JUST TO KILL 'EM. THEY'D FIND THESE GUYS SPREAD ALL OVER THE DAMN PLACE. HEADS SPIKED ON PICKET FENCES, GUTS STRETCHED OUTTA THEIR BELLIES...I HEARD ONCE OR TWICE THERE WAS ***BITE MARKS*** ON 'EM...

I NEVER USED HIM. THERE WAS SOMETHIN' ABOUT THAT GUY, LIKE EVERYTHING HE TOUCHED TURNED TO CRAP. ANYONE HE GOT INVOLVED WITH, THINGS'D GO SORTA ***SOUR*** FOR THEM...

ALL HE EVER DID WAS PISS HIS MONEY AWAY ON WHORES AN' SMACK. HE LIVED HIS WHOLE LIFE IN A WORLD OF GARBAGE--AN' IT SUITED HIM JUST FINE.

AN' THEN ONE NIGHT HE TURNED UP DEAD. HE'D BEEN IN BED WITH THIS HOOKER, AN' THE STORY SHE TOLD WAS HE JUST CROAKED ON HER WHILE THEY WERE DOIN' IT.

STRANGEST THING.

DIDN'T MEAN JACK TO ME. ALL I THOUGHT WAS, GREAT, ONE LESS DEGENERATE INNA WORLD, MAKES LIFE EASIER ONNA REST'VE US.

AN' THEN A FEW YEARS LATER, THIS GUY CAME TO SEE ME...

WEIRD-LOOKIN' CREEP. BALD, BUT WITH THESE CRAZY TATTOOS UP THE SIDE OF HIS HEAD, YOU KNOW? AN' HIS EYES... JESUS...

WHAT ABOUT THEM?

IT WAS ALMOST LIKE THEY WERE ***BURNIN'.***

SONATINE.

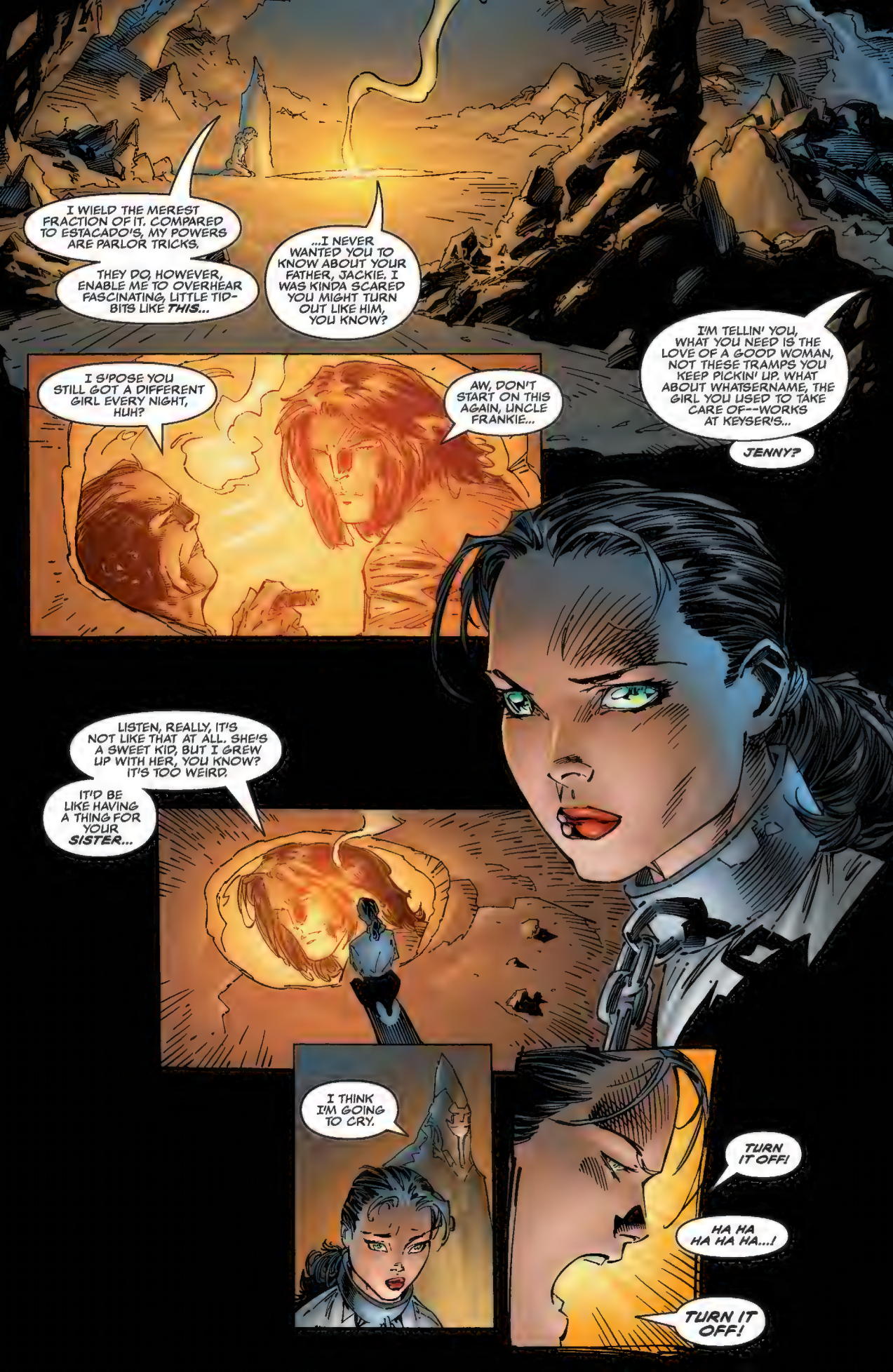
"HE JUST APPEARED OUTTA NOWHERE. I GOT NO IDEA HOW HE GOT PAST THE GUARDS AN' THE DOGS, BUT ONE MINUTE I'M STANIN' LOOKIN' AT THE STARS ALL ON MY LONESOME, OUTSIDE MY ROOM--THE NEXT HE'S JUST THERE..."
"I WAS JUST ABOUT TO BLOW HIS FREAKIN' HEAD OFF WHEN HE SAID--"
DANNY ESTACADO HAD A SON.
HUH?
THE WHORE HE DIED WITH. SHE GAVE BIRTH TO HIS CHILD. THE EFFORT KILLED HER.
LISTEN, MEATHEAD, WHAT THE HELL 'RE YOU TELLIN' ME THIS FOR?
WHO ARE YOU, ANYWAY?
YOU SHOULD GO TO THAT BOY. YOU SHOULD BRING HIM HOME AND RAISE HIM AS YOUR OWN.
AND WHY WOULD I WANNA DO THAT, EXACTLY?
BECAUSE HE WILL MAKE YOU MIGHTY.

HOLY GOD-!
WOULD YOU LIKE THAT, FRANKIE?
POWER BEYOND MEASURE?
EVERY WORD OBEYED WITHOUT QUESTION?
THE FRANCHETTIS ON TOP OF THE HEAP?
IT COULD ALL BE YOURS.
THE BOY'S NAME IS JACKIE ESTACADO. HE IS SIX YEARS OLD. YOU WILL FIND HIM AT SAINT GERALD'S ORPHANAGE IN THE BOWERY DISTRICT OF NEW YORK CITY.
WH-WH-WHY ME?
THE FATHER WAS A DISAPPOINTMENT TO US. WE ARE HOPING FOR BETTER THINGS FROM THE SON.
I AM SURE YOU WILL BE AN EXCELLENT INFLUENCE.

AN' AFTER THAT I NEVER SEEN HIM AGAIN.
I WENT AN' FETCHED YOU AN' TOOK YOU HOME, AN' I GUESS THE REST IS HISTORY...
AN' I GOTTA SAY, JACKIE: THE SON OF A BITCH WAS RIGHT.
YOU WORKED OUT GREAT.
"FIRST GUY YOU WHACKED FOR ME, YOU WAS SIXTEEN. THING I SAW ABOUT YOU EARLY ON WAS, YOU ALWAYS KNEW JUST WHO TO HIT AN' HOW HARD TO HIT 'EM. YOU GOT EXACTLY THE RIGHT RESULT.
KLIK
"SHORT TIME I HAD YOU WITH ME, I WENT FROM A LITTLE GUY TO THE TOPPA THE HEAP. JUST ABOUT BOSS OF BOSSES, I GUESS. AN' WE DIDN'T HAVE TO WIPE OUT WHOLE FAMILIES, OR ACT LIKE SAVAGES, OR MAKE A DAMN MESS...
"ALL WE HADDA DO WAS KILL ALL THE RIGHT PEOPLE."

YOU DID THAT TO HIM.
WHAT?
YOU SENT HIM TO LIVE WITH THOSE MAFIA PIGS. HE WAS A GOOD KID WHEN HE LEFT THE ORPHANAGE, BUT THEY TURNED HIM INTO A KILLER.
WHAT RUBBISH. HE WAS A VICIOUS LITTLE BASTARD EVEN WHEN YOU KNEW HIM.
THE WHOLE POINT OF HAVING HIM GROW UP IN THE MOB WAS TO ENSURE HE STAYED THAT WAY, INSTEAD OF BECOMING THE WORTHLESS REFUSE HIS FATHER WAS. I WANT A BASTARD.
I DON'T WANT SCUM.
HUH?
FRANKIE FRANCHETTI IS A MONSTER, BUT HE'S AN INTELLIGENT ONE. HE KNEW DANNY ESTACADO--I KNEW HE'D TAKE STEPS TO ENSURE THAT JACKIE DIDN'T GO THE SAME WAY...
THERE'S AN INSPIRING LITTLE STORY, EH?
SO WHY NOT JUST RAISE HIM YOURSELF? WHY SEND HIM TO FRANCHETTI?
WHAT? YOU THINK I WANTED A KID RUNNING AROUND THE PLACE, GETTING UNDER MY FEET?
I HATE CHILDREN...

THERE'S A SURPRISE.
HIS FATHER WAS A WASTE OF TIME. HE SQUANDERED THE DARKNESS ON PETTY LUSTS AND CRAVINGS, USED IT TO INDULGE HIS POINTLESS, DIRECTIONLESS SADISM...
JACKIE ESTACADO IS A MUCH BRIGHTER PROSPECT. THANKS TO FRANCHETTI, HE IS NO STRANGER TO WHAT A DULLARD LIKE YOU WOULD CALL EVIL--AND AGAIN THANKS TO FRANCHETTI, HE IS SMART ENOUGH TO EXPLOIT HIS POWER TO MAXIMUM ADVANTAGE.
I KNEW I WOULD BE SAFE LEAVING HIM IN THE DON'S CARE UNTIL HE WAS OLD ENOUGH TO MANIFEST THE DARKNESS. THEN I COULD STEP IN AND STEER HIM TOWARD HIS DESTINY.
THE ONLY PROBLEM IS, THE LITTLE REPTILE REFUSES TO PLAY BALL.
WHAT'S THIS DARKNESS YOU KEEP GOING ON ABOUT?
I'LL TRY AND PUT IT IN IDIOT'S TERMS. HAVE YOU SEEN STAR WARS?
WELL... YES...
THE DARKNESS IS THE FORCE ON CRACK.


I WIELD THE MEREST FRACTION OF IT. COMPARED TO ESTACADO'S, MY POWERS ARE PARLOR TRICKS.
THEY DO, HOWEVER, ENABLE ME TO OVERHEAR FASCINATING, LITTLE TID-BITS LIKE THIS...
...I NEVER WANTED YOU TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR FATHER, JACKIE. I WAS KINDA SCARED YOU MIGHT TURN OUT LIKE HIM, YOU KNOW?
I'M TELLIN' YOU, WHAT YOU NEED IS THE LOVE OF A GOOD WOMAN, NOT THESE TRAMPS YOU KEEP PICKIN' UP. WHAT ABOUT WHATSERNAME, THE GIRL YOU USED TO TAKE CARE OF--WORKS AT KEYSER'S...
JENNY?
I S'POSE YOU STILL GOT A DIFFERENT GIRL EVERY NIGHT, HUH?
AW, DON'T START ON THIS AGAIN, UNCLE FRANKIE...
LISTEN, REALLY, IT'S NOT LIKE THAT AT ALL. SHE'S A SWEET KID, BUT I GREW UP WITH HER, YOU KNOW? IT'S TOO WEIRD.
IT'D BE LIKE HAVING A THING FOR YOUR SISTER...
I THINK I'M GOING TO CRY.
TURN IT OFF!
HA HA HA HA HA...!
TURN IT OFF!

LORD SONATINE! THE PRISONER IS LOOSE!
WHAT?
THE ANGELUS' FAMILIAR, MY LORD! SHE'S NOWHERE IN THE CAVERNS! SHE MUST HAVE GOTTEN AWAY!
HOW, FOR GOD'S SAKE?!
HER GUARDS ARE DEAD ON THE FLOOR OF HER CELL. I DON'T KNOW WHAT SHE DID, SHE...THEY'RE SMILING, MY LORD. SMILING LIKE THEY'D SEEN SOMETHING WONDERFUL...
EXCEPT... SHE'S GONE...
"AND THEIR THROATS ARE TORN OUT."

SHE CHARMED THEM INTO ENTERING THE CELL, YOU IDIOT! THE ANGELUS CREATED HER FOR PLEASURE! THEY WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO RESIST!
M-M-MY LORD?
CALL ESTACADO ON HIS MOBILE. TELL HIM HIS TWENTY-FOUR HOURS ARE UP. TELL HIM TO GET AFTER THAT BITCH NOW--AND MAKE SURE HE HANDS HER OVER TO YOU, PERSONALLY.
OR ANY CHANCE WE HAVE OF DRAWING THE ANGELUS INTO A TRAP IS GONE.
MY LADY... PLEASE HEAR ME...
I NEED YOU, MY LADY... I HAVE BARELY STRENGTH TO REACH THE SHORE...
I HEAR YOU, MY SWEET.
DO NOT DESPAIR.
I AM COMING.

STATEN ISLAND FERRY
YOU DIDN'T GET TOO FAR, DID YOU?
UH...?
ESTACADO! HOW--
HAPPENED TO BE IN THE AREA, GOT A CALL SAYING YOU MIGHT BE HEADED THIS WAY, SAW YOU FALL IN THE DRINK, LAUGHED MY ASS OFF.
GET IN THE CAR, HUH?
NEVER!
OH, DON'T BE STUPID...!
GO BACK TO HELL, FOUL CREATURE OF DARKNESS!
NO! WAIT! YOU'RE GONNA--
MY WINGS! MY WINGS!
TOO WET TO--

UH-OH...
BLECH.
NOOOOOO!!

WHAAAGHH!
ABOMINATION!
WHUH--
WHA--?
IT TOOK A HUNDRED YEARS TO SHAPE HER! A HUNDRED MORE TO GIVE HER LIFE! AND YOU DESTROYED HER IN AN INSTANT!
MURDERER! KILLER! EVIL BASTARD!
YOU CAN
AAAAAHH!
TEMPER...!

GUUCCCHH! MYH WARRIORCH! HECCP MEH!
UNHAND THE LADY!
PUCKER UP--
YOU GOT IT.
NO!!
EEEIGGHH!
NNOOOO!
AAAIEEE!

SO.
WHERE WERE WE?

A POX ON YOU, ESTACADO!
YAAAHH--!
FOR WHAT YOU HAVE DONE THIS DAY I WILL SEE YOU BURN IN HELL. NOT IN ALL MY TWELVE HUNDRED YEARS HAVE I FELT A HATE LIKE THIS.
I LOVED HER. YOU KILLED HER. I WILL FACE YOU ONE MORE TIME-- THE CHAMPION OF LIGHT AGAINST THE WIELDER OF THE DARKNESS..
I PROMISE YOU: YOUR DEATH WILL LAST A LIFETIME.
SHE'S... SCARED...
ESTACADO!
ESTACADO, WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED?!

HEY, WENDERS. YOU JUST MISSED THE ANGELUS.
DID SHE GET HER FAMILIAR BACK?
NOPE. HER FAMILIAR GOT CHOPPED INTO SEAFOOD.
WHAT?!
'FRAID SO. TOTAL SOUP.
OH GOD, SONATINE'S GOING TO KILL ME! WE'VE JUST LOST THE ONLY HOLD WE HAD OVER THE ANGELUS!
BUT WHY DO WE NEED A HOLD OVER HER, WHEN IT'S OBVIOUS THE DARKNESS IS STRONGER THAN HER, ANYWAY?
SHE WAS SCARED OF ME...
ONLY IN THE DARK, WHEN YOU CAN MANIFEST YOUR POWER! HERS IS NOT LIMITED BY NIGHT OR DAYLIGHT! SHE CAN COME FOR US AT ANYTIME!
THAT A FACT?
THEN YOU'VE JUST GIVEN ME AN IDEA...
ULP!

KNOW WHAT THIS IS, WENDERS?
THIS IS DARKUS.
SAY HELLO TO WENDERS, DARKUS...
NO...
HIYA, WENDERS! YOU UGLY BUCKET OF SICK!
BETTER GET USED TO HIM, WENDERS. YOU'RE GOING TO BE SPENDING A LOT OF TIME TOGETHER
YOU CRAPSTAIN! YOU SCUMMY LITTLE NOSEPICK! YOU STUPID SON OF A WHORE!
WH-WH-WHY?
'CAUSE HE'S TAKING UP RESIDENCE IN YOUR PANTS, THAT'S WHY.
YOU SUCK, WENDERS! I HOPE YOU FRIGGIN' DIE!
YOU'RE GOING TO GO BACK TO SONATINE AND GIVE HIM A MESSAGE. YOU'RE GOING TO TELL HIM I'M COMING TO LIBERTY, TOMORROW AT DAWN, AND HE'D BETTER HAVE JENNY WITH HIM BECAUSE I WANT TO TALK BUSINESS...
AND THEN YOU'RE GOING TO DO ME A LITTLE FAVOR.
I-I-I AM?

SURE YOU ARE. BECAUSE IF YOU DON'T DO WHAT I SAY, OR YOU TRY TO TIP SONATINE OFF ABOUT THIS, DARKUS WILL KNOW. AND THAT MEANS I'LL KNOW.
IT'S ALWAYS DARK IN YOUR PANTS, WENDERS. DARKUS WILL BE OKAY, WHETHER IT'S DAY OR NIGHT OUTSIDE. AND IF HE TELLS ME YOU'RE TRYING TO PULL A FAST ONE...
I'LL TELL HIM TO BITE.
I HATE YOU, WENDERS! I'LL PISS ON YOUR FREAKIN' GRAVE!
ANGELUS!
ESTACADO--!

SHOW YOURSELF, VERMIN!

WHY? YOU'LL ONLY RUN AWAY AGAIN. BESIDES, I'LL BE HONEST WITH YOU:

I'M NOT REALLY THERE...

I KEEP FINDING OUT MORE AND MORE ABOUT THE DARKNESS. THINGS I CAN DO. WAYS I CAN KILL.

HOW TO TALK TO SOMEONE, WHEN THEY'RE TOO SCARED TO FACE YOU.

DAMN YOU, MORTAL! WHAT DO YOU WANT?

IF THE WAR BETWEEN DARKNESS AND ANGELUS HAS BEEN GOING ON AS LONG AS YOU SAY, IT'S TIME WE PUT AN END TO IT.

ONCE AND FOR ALL.

THEN NAME THE PLACE, ESTACADO.

LET'S DO IT.

HE SAID THAT? ARE YOU SURE?

Y-YES, MY LORD. HE WILL BE HERE AT FIRST LIGHT. HE SAYS HE'LL MEET US AT THE BASE OF THE STATUE.

YOU'RE ***SWEATING***, WENDERS...

S-SORRY, MY LORD!

IT MAKES YOU LOOK EVEN MORE REPULSIVE THAN USUAL. STOP IT AT ONCE.

HMMM.

THE PARK RANGERS CANNOT FAIL TO NOTICE US. HAVE THEM CAPTURED AND HELD BELOW.

YES, LORD SONATINE.

I DON'T KNOW ***WHAT*** ESTACADO THINKS HE'S UP TO. PERHAPS HE STILL ENTERTAINS SOME FARCICAL NOTION OF DENYING ME, OF USING THE DARKNESS FOR HIS OWN ENDS...

HE'S ***SLY***...

BUT NOT SLY ENOUGH.

TO BE CONTINUED.

ISSUE #6

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ink assists: Victor Llamas

YOU'RE SWEATING AGAIN, WENDERS...
I TOLD YOU, I DON'T LIKE IT. STOP IT AT ONCE. AND WHY DO YOU KEEP STARING AT YOUR CROTCH?
L-L-LORD SONATINE?
BELIEVE ME, WENDERS, THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NOTHING OF INTEREST IN YOUR CROTCH. KEEP YOUR EYES PEELED FOR ESTACADO, WILL YOU?
HE'LL BE COMING TO GET HIS LITTLE IRRELEVANCE, HERE...
AAOW!
I'M HERE, SONATINE.
I'M NOT ALONE.
WHAT--?

End of an Era

ANGELUS?

ESTACADO, WHAT THE HELL HAVE YOU *DONE?*

ARRANGED TO MEET HER HERE. I THOUGHT IT WAS TIME WE GOT EVERYBODY TOGETHER.

BUT BY BRINGING HER HERE, YOU'VE COMPROMISED OUR SECRET BASE! SHE CAN FINISH US IN ONE GO! AND IT'S *DAYLIGHT,* YOU IDIOT!

YOU CAN'T STOP HER FROM KILLING US ALL!

AND DO NOT DOUBT IT, ESTACADO:

THAT IS *EXACTLY* WHAT I'M ABOUT TO DO.

WENDERS!
YESSIR!
WENDERS?
KA-BOOM-FF
AHH--!
DAMN YOU, ESTACADO! WHAT--
SMOKE GRENADES.
I LIKE THE DARK.

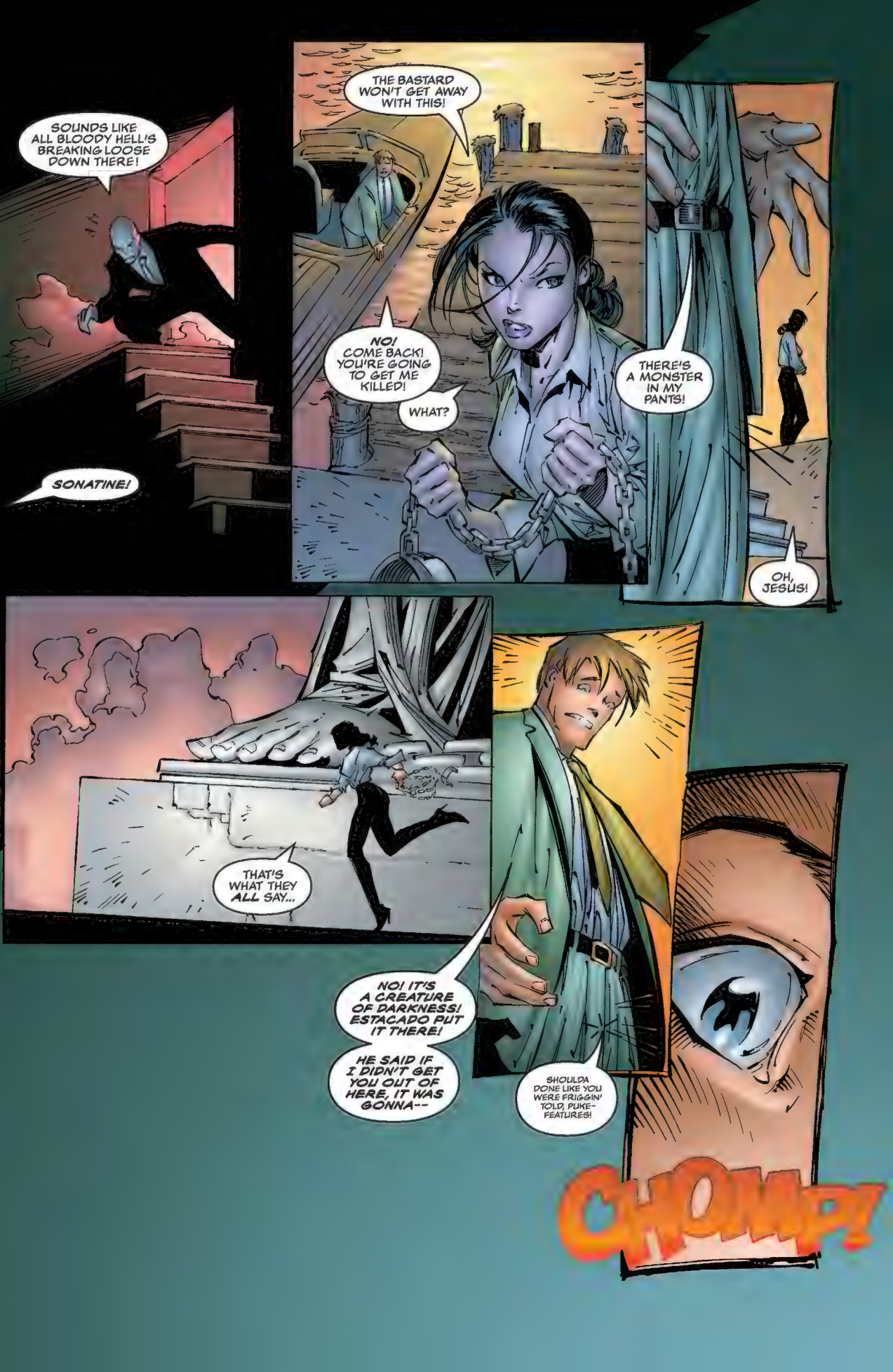
IT WON'T LAST, BASTARD! I'LL HAVE YOU YET!
IT'LL LAST LONG ENOUGH-- WENDERS--
WENDERS, YOU UTTER EXCRESCENCE! WHAT IN HELL'S NAME--?
BEEP!
F-F-FORGIVE ME, MY LORD!
NO! NO! GET YOUR HANDS OFF ME!
COUPLE SECONDS MORE--
NO!

RUN!
THE ANGELUS HAS FOUND US! THE BITCH'LL KILL US ALL!
COME BACK, YOU COWARDS!
YOU'RE DEAD, YOU BASTARDS! YOUR MOTHERS ARE ALL WHORES!
WHAT THE--?
DON'T TALK! WE HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE!
ESTACADO'S GOT HER! DAMN YOU! DO AS I SAY OR I'LL KILL THE BLOODY LOT OF YOU!
BUT WHY ARE YOU HELPING ME?
ESTACADO! HE SAYS TO GET YOU OFF THE ISLAND! I'VE GOT TO DO IT OR I'M DEAD!
WHAT IN THE NAME OF UNHOLY VOMIT IS GOING ON HERE?!

I KNOW YOU'RE THERE, ESTACADO! YOU CAN'T HIDE IN THE DARK FOREVER!
THIS IS WHERE YOU BELONG, VERMIN-SKULKING IN THE SHADOWS OF SONATINE'S CAVERNS... CRAWLING LIKE SOME BLIND, GROPING RAT THAT PREYS ON THE DETRITUS OF HUMANITY... EXISTING ON EVERYTHING THAT'S BLACK AND BAD AND ROTTEN...
BUT I WILL FIND YOU. I WILL BURN YOU FROM YOUR HOLE. THERE IS NOWHERE YOU CAN HIDE FROM THE LIGHT OF THE ANGELUS...
NOWHERE!
WHO'S HIDING?

THIS IS WHERE I BELONG, ANGELUS. I KNEW I'D NEVER GET YOU TO FIGHT ME OUT OF THE DAYLIGHT, SO I HAD THAT TURD WENDERS SET A LITTLE TRAP FOR YOU.
YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I DO YOUR THOUSAND YEARS EXPERIENCE MEANS SQUAT DOWN HERE. THE DARKNESS IS STRONGER THAN THE ANGELUS.
ONCE I GET YOU IN THE DARK, YOU'RE MINE.
NOOOO!

UMPH!
BE QUICKER IF YOU DON'T STRUGGLE...
SCUM.
OH, HELL--
WE'LL SEE WHO'S STRONGEST, ESTACADO!
WE'LL SEE!!
YEEAAGH!!


SOUNDS LIKE ALL BLOODY HELL'S BREAKING LOOSE DOWN THERE!
SONATINE!
THE BASTARD WON'T GET AWAY WITH THIS!
NO! COME BACK! YOU'RE GOING TO GET ME KILLED!
WHAT?
THERE'S A MONSTER IN MY PANTS!
OH, JESUS!
THAT'S WHAT THEY ALL SAY...
NO! IT'S A CREATURE OF DARKNESS! ESTACADO PUT IT THERE!
HE SAID IF I DIDN'T GET YOU OUT OF HERE, IT WAS GONNA--
SHOULDA DONE LIKE YOU WERE FRIGGIN' TOLD, PUKE-FEATURES!
CHOMP!

YOU WORTHLESS BASTARD INSECT!
WHUGGHH!!
YOU'LL DIE LIKE YOUR DEGENERATE FORE-FATHERS!
GUHH!
WHA--?
YOU'RE NOT THE FIRST, ESTACADO! A DOZEN CHAMPIONS OF DARKNESS HAVE FALLEN TO MY POWER! CENTURY AFTER CENTURY, ONE BY ONE, THEY CAME!
THEY TRIED!
THEY DIED!!
SKRUNCHH!
AAAAAHHH
SSSSSSS
AAAGH!
AND ONE BY ONE, I SENT THEM DOWN TO HELL!

NNOOOO!
I'M COMING THROUGH YOUR ARMOR, ESTACADO! I'LL BOIL YOUR BLOODY EYEBALLS! I'LL SLICE YOU UP AND PLAY YOUR RIBS LIKE KEYS ON A PIANO!
DO YOU EVER SHUT UP?
WAAAH--!
SHRRIITTCHH!

THAT'S IT--YOU'VE GOT HER--
WHANGG!
AAAAHH!
REMEMBER ME, SONATINE?
OH, NO!
THE WENCH?
WUHH!
THE SILLY LITTLE THING?
HNNGH!

THE IDIOT?
AAAIIEEE!
THE LITTLE IRRELEVANCE!
REMEMBER ME NOW, YOU SON OF A BITCH?
AAHH--!

AAAAAHHH!
JENNY!
YEEEOW!
JACKIE...?

THIS...
THIS ISN'T OVER YET...
NO?
I THINK IT IS.
I THINK YOU'RE JUST ABOUT OUT OF JUICE.
YOU--!

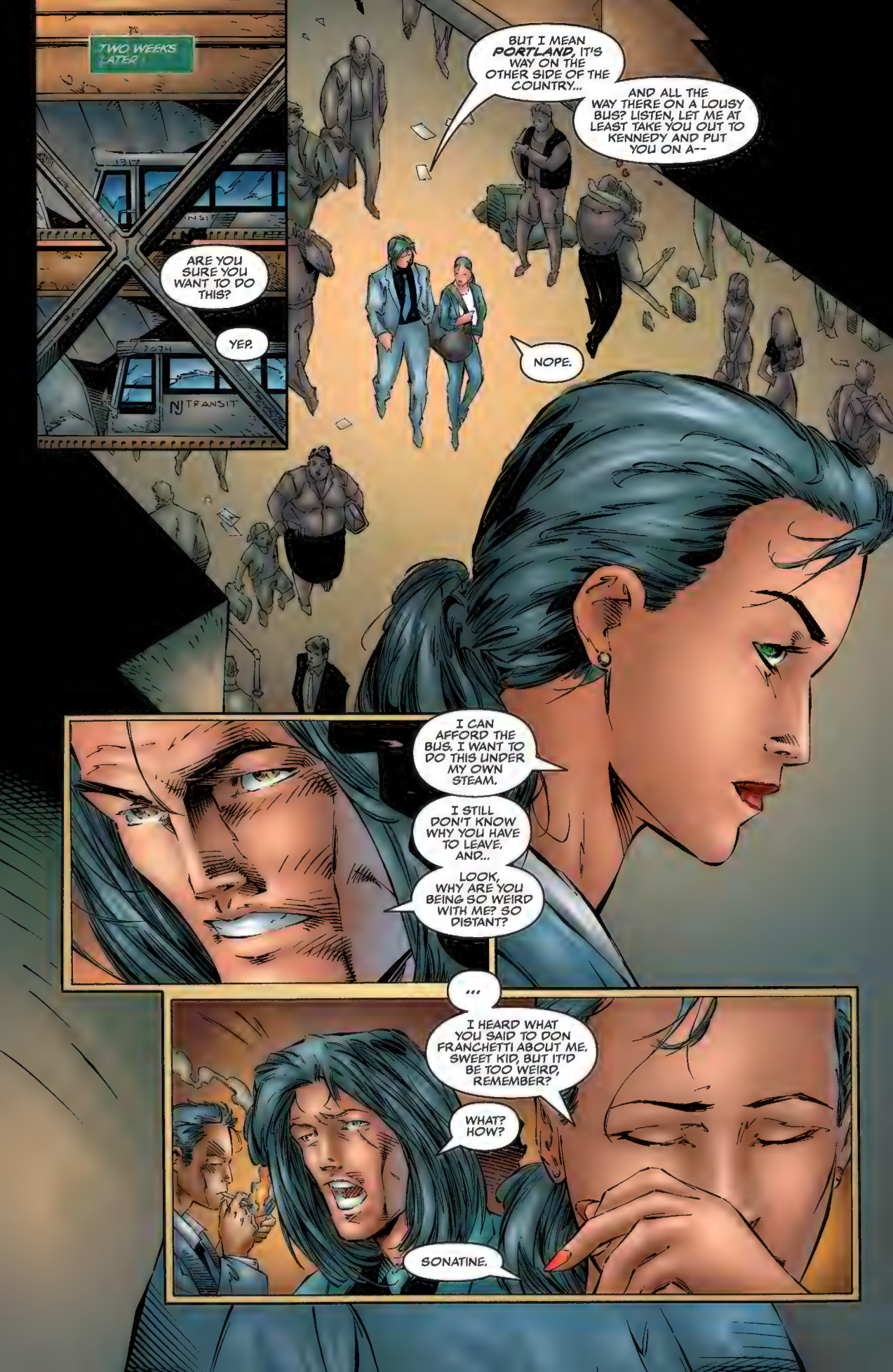
SEE, I THINK I FIGURED OUT WHY YOU'RE SCARED OF THE DARK. I THINK A THOUSAND-YEAR-OLD CHAMPION OF LIGHT CAN ONLY LAST SO LONG WHEN SHE'S OUT OF IT. AND YOU USED UP EVERYTHING YOU HAD KICKING MY ASS, DIDN'T YOU?
THE ONLY WAY YOU CAN RECHARGE YOURSELF NOW...
IS TO GET ALL THE WAY BACK UP THERE.
CURSSSE YOU... ESSSSTACAAAAADOOO...
BLOW OUT YOUR CANDLES, GRANNY.
YOUR TIME'S UP.

IS SHE...?

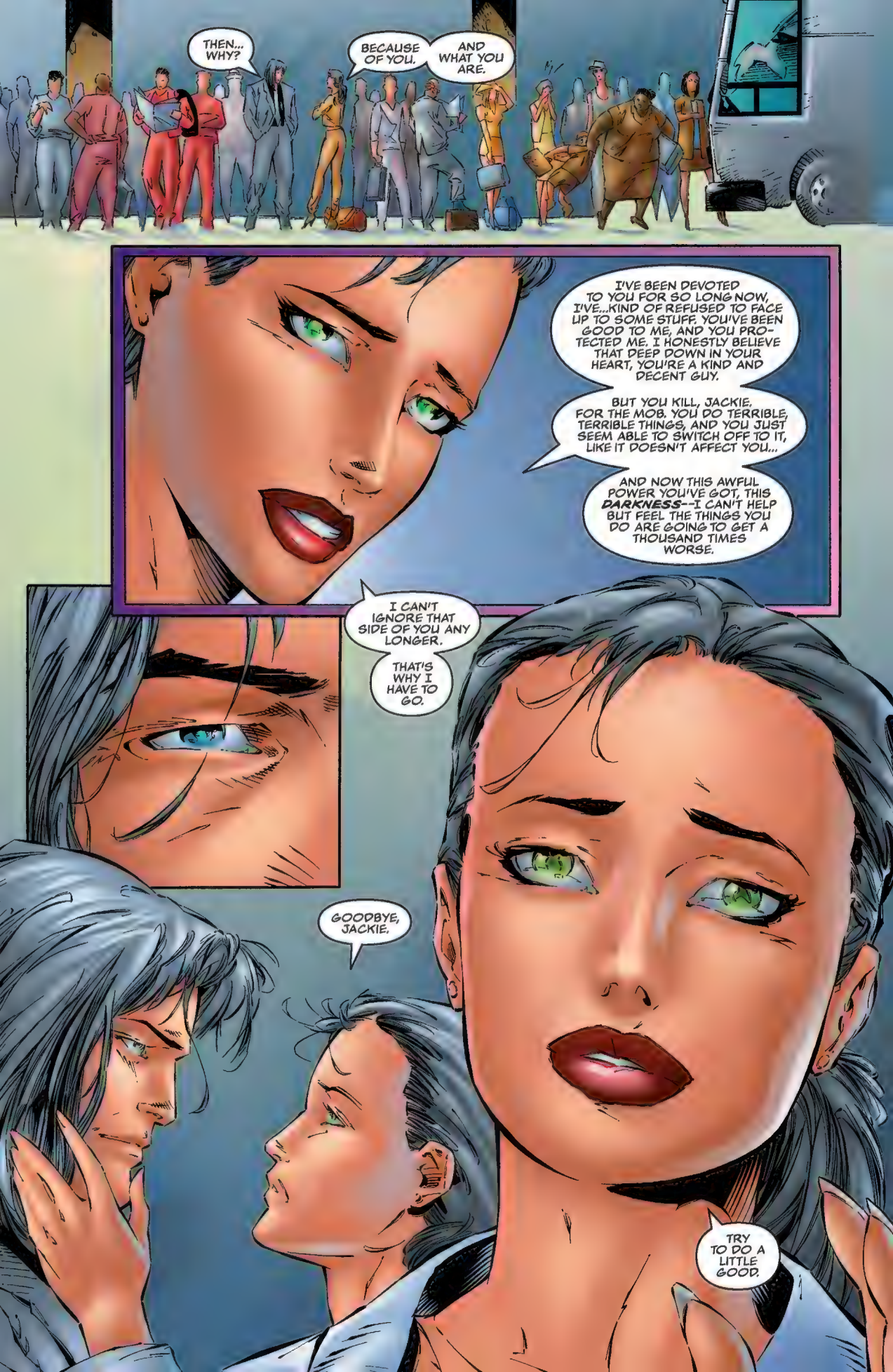
HOLD IT.

WHOA--!

IT WAS STILL ALIVE...!
MAYBE.
I THINK THE ANGELUS IS LIKE THIS DARKNESS--YOU CAN KILL THE WIELDER, BUT THE POWER LIVES ON. RIGHT NOW, IT'S PROBABLY TRYING TO FIND A NEW HOST.
SONATINE WOULD PROBABLY KNOW...
EXCEPT HE GOT AWAY. SORRY.
IF HE'S GOT ANY SENSE, HE'LL KEEP ON RUNNING 'TIL HE HITS ALASKA. I OWE THE BASTARD BIG TIME.
JACKIE?
CAN YOU GET ME OUT OF HERE NOW?

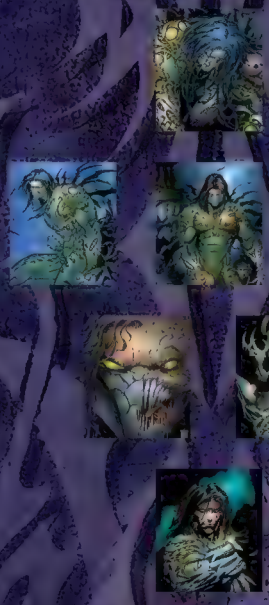

TWO WEEKS LATER
ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT TO DO THIS?
YEP.
NJ TRANSIT
BUT I MEAN PORTLAND, IT'S WAY ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COUNTRY...
AND ALL THE WAY THERE ON A LOUSY BUS? LISTEN, LET ME AT LEAST TAKE YOU OUT TO KENNEDY AND PUT YOU ON A--
NOPE.
I CAN AFFORD THE BUS. I WANT TO DO THIS UNDER MY OWN STEAM.
I STILL DON'T KNOW WHY YOU HAVE TO LEAVE, AND...
LOOK, WHY ARE YOU BEING SO WEIRD WITH ME? SO DISTANT?
...
I HEARD WHAT YOU SAID TO DON FRANCHETTI ABOUT ME, SWEET KID, BUT IT'D BE TOO WEIRD, REMEMBER?
WHAT? HOW?
SONATINE.

OH, GOD...
JENNY..LOOK, YOU WEREN'T EVEN MEANT TO HEAR THAT STUFF...I DIDN'T KNOW--I MEAN, ARE YOU SAYING YOU HAD FEELINGS FOR ME...?
ALWAYS, YOU IDIOT.
YOU LOOKED AFTER ME WHEN I WAS ALL ALONE IN THE WORLD. YOU NEVER LET ANYONE HURT ME. EVEN WHEN THE DON TOOK YOU AWAY, YOU STILL CAME BACK TO CHECK ON ME.
YOU WERE ALWAYS THERE FOR ME, JACKIE.
BUT I WAS JUST...IT WAS BECAUSE...
OH JENNY, I AM SO SORRY. I NEVER MEANT FOR YOU TO THINK THERE WAS ANYTHING MORE TO IT THAN...
I'VE NEVER BEEN VERY GOOD AT THIS STUFF.
FORGET IT.
IT'S NOT EVEN WHY I'M LEAVING.


THEN... WHY?
BECAUSE OF YOU.
AND WHAT YOU ARE.
I'VE BEEN DEVOTED TO YOU FOR SO LONG NOW, I'VE...KIND OF REFUSED TO FACE UP TO SOME STUFF. YOU'VE BEEN GOOD TO ME, AND YOU PROTECTED ME. I HONESTLY BELIEVE THAT DEEP DOWN IN YOUR HEART, YOU'RE A KIND AND DECENT GUY.
BUT YOU KILL, JACKIE. FOR THE MOB. YOU DO TERRIBLE, TERRIBLE THINGS, AND YOU JUST SEEM ABLE TO SWITCH OFF TO IT, LIKE IT DOESN'T AFFECT YOU...
AND NOW THIS AWFUL POWER YOU'VE GOT, THIS DARKNESS--I CAN'T HELP BUT FEEL THE THINGS YOU DO ARE GOING TO GET A THOUSAND TIMES WORSE.
I CAN'T IGNORE THAT SIDE OF YOU ANY LONGER.
THAT'S WHY I HAVE TO GO.
GOODBYE, JACKIE.
TRY TO DO A LITTLE GOOD.

YOU WERE THE ONLY GOOD IN MY LIFE, JENNY.
"THAT'S WHY I LOOKED AFTER YOU."
I WISH TO GOD YOU'D STAYED.

COVER GALLERY



The Darkness Preview
issue #1–6 covers
art by Marc Silvestri
Matt "Batt" Banning
and Steve Firchow

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The Darkness: Origins Volume 1 tells the story of how mafia hitman Jackie Estacado was blessed and cursed on his 21st birthday when he inherited the power of The Darkness. This volume collects the origin of Estacado as the current bearer of The Darkness and introduces classic characters such as the Angelus, Butcher, and Sonatine.

• • • • •

This brand-new trade paperback collects *The Darkness* issues #1-6 and *The Darkness* Preview issue. Featuring stunning artwork and a cover gallery by superstar penciler **Marc Silvestri** (*Wolverine, Dark Avengers/X-Men: Utopia*) with story by *The Darkness* co-creator **Garth Ennis** (*Hellblazer*, *Punisher*).

Mafia Hitman Jackie Estacado was both blessed and cursed on his 21st birthday when he became the bearer of The Darkness, an elemental force that allows those who wield it access to an otherwordly dimension and control over the demons who dwell there. Forces for good in the world rise up to face Jackie and the evil his gift represents. There is one small problem, in this story...they are the bad guys.

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